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FROM  
THE BEGINNING  
TO  
THE END.



FROM  
THE BEGINNING  
TO  
THE END.





FROM  
THE BEGINNING TO THE END;

OR

*Ruin and Restoration.*

BY

EDWARD HENRY BRIEN, A.B.,

ARCHDEACON OF EMLY.



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## P R E F A C E .

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THERE are many subjects of the highest interest adverted to in the following pages. The majority of them could be very largely expanded: very many of them, perhaps, not unprofitably. But this, while it would have increased considerably the bulk of the volume, would also have interfered to a great extent with the design of the author, which is to present a connected view, from the beginning to the end, of the wonderful work of God in reference to man and the earth, which is his dwelling-place, rather than to enter on an amplified examination of particular points: not, indeed, that the examination and discussion of important subjects have been in every case lightly passed over, but only so much has been said as was sufficient to present them with clearness, and establish their certainty, never losing sight of the general design of the whole.

If there are things written here which are at variance with the free-thinking of the present age, and with

much which goes under the name of science, yet there is no intention on the part of the writer to cavil at reasonable liberty of thought, or for a moment to call in question the ascertained facts and phenomena of science: for he believes that in the revelations of science, as well as in the word of Holy Scripture, the wonderful works of God are made manifest; and these to every thoughtful, reverent mind will be a source of admiration, and adoration to the Great Author of all things—"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." But there is good reason for thinking, that in the present day there is much which passes under the name of science which would with greater propriety be designated, the speculations of imagination—crude theories which are continually changing their form, like the clouds of heaven shifting and tossing about on a windy day.

The promulgation of these imaginative speculations and theories would be of comparatively little moment, if those who propound them did not either deny the revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures, or seek to explain away that which is written there, making the Bible prove everything and nothing. But it is a day in which there is great opposition to that precious and holy Book: yet that Book, like Jerusalem of the future, will be a burdensome stone to all corrupters and opposers of its divine truth. "All that burden themselves with it

shall be cut to pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered against it." Human conceit and the pride of intellect shall perish, but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.

The author is responsible for all that is written in this volume; for it is not a digest of other men's thoughts, but the result, in almost every particular, of original thinking on the Scripture of truth, and the ways, and works, and operations of God. But if similar thoughts have occurred to others, and have been by them communicated through the pulpit or the press, this only tends to the confirmation of truth: for when different minds reach the same conclusions from the same sources of information, and independently of any direct interchange of thoughts, there is in this presumptive evidence of the correctness of those conclusions.

DROMKEEN, PALLASGREAN,  
*October, 1876.*









# RUIN AND RESTORATION.

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## CHAPTER I.

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Ruin: Its Nature and Extent—The Deluge: Partial or Universal?—The Fall from the original Constitution of Things—The Bible Narrative of Creation—The “Days” in the First Chapter of the Book of Genesis—Geological Hypothesis—The primeval Temptation and Fall: Consideration of some difficult Questions connected with it.

**T**HE Scripture says in a certain place, referring probably to the righteous judgment of God, “Thou hast destroyed cities: their memorial is perished with them.”

Of some cities of ancient times this is doubtless true. All traces, all vestiges of them are obliterated. They are forgotten like the names of those who created them. But it is not so with all. In various parts of the earth, there exist, to this very day, the ruins of what must have been great and populous and flourishing cities in times gone by.

The remains of splendid temples, pillars, colonnades, and majestic arches, all exhibiting elaborate design, exquisite carving, and the highest finish of architectural

skill—the brilliant colouring of the frescoes, scarcely dimmed by the wasting action of the elements of decay in the lapse of ages—and the wide area occupied by the ruins—all bear testimony, certain and true, as to the original greatness of those cities in the day of their pomp. Proud they were, and illustrious and wealthy : at once, centres of commercial activity and military prowess. The enterprising traveller passes through them, and gazes on the grandeur of those ruins so intensely fascinating, while in the deep solitude and unbroken silence, there is a memorial eloquence which, though it speaks not audibly to the ear, yet appeals with thrilling power to the heart, telling of human greatness superseded by human vanity.

But there is in the world a ruin, which is of a more widely-spread and impressive character than any which is associated with the cities of ancient time, though it may not, perhaps, strike the senses so forcibly—a ruin which dates back from earliest ages, and subsists to the present time, not bounded by the confines of any one country or locality, but pervading the universal earth, comprehending in it the intellectual, moral, and physical part of man, reaching to the brute creation, and extending even to the very ground.

There may be—yea, and there are—intellects, bright, brilliant, full of energy and activity, such as have commanded universal admiration, and influenced appreciably and wonderfully the interests of mankind, yet the intellect of man in its complex aspect is deteriorated. As in a natural ruin there may be stones—yea, many stones, that are perfect ; and magnificent sculptures, that to the eye of sense appear intact and uninjured,

yet, regarding the thing as a whole, it is a ruin ; so also with the intellectual part of man, insomuch that if there be some intellects that shine with apparently undimmed brilliancy, yet there are others that are overclouded—yea, some benighted to the obscuration of reason ; and even when this is not the case, yet there are many in whom the intellectual part of their nature is so debased that they seem scarcely raised above the level of the brute creation.

In the same way, the body of man, though in some it is perfectly healthy—an apt vehicle for the action and manifestation of the soul and all the intellectual powers, yet in others it is the subject of most distressing and painful diseases, making life to the possessor of it a burden instead of a pleasure ; and even with regard to all, it is a sad and solemn certainty that their bodies are liable to wasting sickness and most distressing maladies, terminating ultimately in death and humiliating decomposition in the darkness and silence of the grave.

Even the earth itself is more or less affected, and has its part in the great and general ruin. It brings forth thorns and thistles and noxious weeds abundantly, and gives not wholesome food but by laborious cultivation ; and then also there are disasters innumerable, storms, and earthquakes, and endless calamities destroying life, impairing comfort, filling the heart with anguish.

But the traces of ruin are still more marked in the moral part of our nature. The Word of God has given witness that “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ;” that “out of it proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, thefts, covetousness,

wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Even under favourable circumstances, these things appear. Sometimes, in communities, they assume the darkest complexion of evil, and lead to the most terrible consequences—confusion, bloodshed, and the premature death of millions.

These things are matters of such solemn certainty, that they cannot be denied, even by the most unreasonable. That the world is in a state of disaster, no man can gainsay. The existence of sin and suffering and death can be no more ignored than men can ignore their own existence. No infidelity can be proof against the certain evidence of all this.

And has it not been so from remote antiquity? Has there not been a prolonged iteration of suffering through all generations? Does not history bear witness? The pages of the world's history are blotted with the tears of sorrowing humanity. They are stained with the blood of slaughtered millions. They are written all over with memorials of terrible calamities and mighty convulsions, political, social, moral, and physical. There have been wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.

And if, speaking generally, the past is crowded with dismal shadows of evils that have been, there is the record of one mighty disaster which may be said to be *sui generis*, of its own kind, and which stands out beyond all others with a prominent distinctiveness of appalling horror. There was nothing like it before. There has been nothing like it since, nor shall be, even to the years of many generations.

The race of man had occupied the earth nearly two

thousand years, when that great disaster occurred. In those days, as now, the ordinary business of the world went on. They bought, they sold, they married, they were given in marriage. Occupied with business or pleasure, their minds became utterly estranged from their Creator, and His holy service. But the calamity came upon them with unexampled severity.

We have read in comparatively modern times of a mighty and populous city being overthrown by an earthquake in a few minutes, and fifty thousand of its inhabitants being swallowed up; but what was that in comparison of the world-wide disaster of ancient times? The world perished in a flood of waters. All the inhabitants of the earth were cut off with the exception of eight persons. All flesh died of man, and beast, and creeping thing.

The story of this calamitous event is solemnly and affectingly recorded in the sacred history; and the histories of other nations have not passed it by unnoticed, though they may have put it in a legendary form, and throughout the world generally, there are traditional records of it, thus incidentally verifying the word of Holy Scripture.

Till a comparatively recent period, the magnitude of this visitation in its universality was very generally acknowledged; but within the last century, many in their prosecutions of scientific research, have called in question the universality of the deluge, and have advanced the opinion, that instead of its pervading the whole earth, it was confined to a limited area, extending probably over a portion only of the Asiatic Continent.

Eminent geologists, and even Christian Divines, have

adopted this view; yet, with the Scripture narrative before us, if we are to regard that as a certain record of truth, it is hard, if not impossible, to consent to such a theory. For in what stronger language than that used in the Bible, an universal deluge could be described, it is very difficult to conceive.

Let anyone read carefully and attentively the seventh chapter of the Book of Genesis from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth verse, and consider what a description is there given, emphatic and precise, one would almost say beyond the possibility of being misapprehended.

This is what the Scripture says:—

“And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.”

How striking and forcible is this passage in the description of the advance of the mighty waters, until they reached the full tide of overwhelming inundation. They INCREASED, they PREVAILED, they PREVAILED EXCEEDINGLY, and ALL the high hills under the whole heaven were covered; and if, then, as now, the Asiatic mountains were the highest in the world, some of them being more than twenty thousand feet above the level of the sea, to what an extraordinary height the waters must have reached; but no wonder, for not only were the windows of heaven opened, but the fountains of the great deep were broken up. Of old, God by the firmament separated the waters from the waters, but now by the fiat of the Almighty, though probably by the intervention of second causes, there was a commingling of them. Who shall calculate the magnitude of the result?

Then as to the universality of the destruction, it is said all flesh died: and lest there should be any misapprehension on the subject, the narrative goes into an amplified detail of fowl, cattle, beast, every creeping thing, and every man, and to guard against the possibility of mistake, if indeed that were possible, the only exceptions are mentioned: Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. Yea, there is so much precision in the narrative, that it says, "All that was in the *dry* land died," leaving the manifest inference that the fishes did not die, because the waters were their native element.

There appears to be such a cumulative force in this testimony, as utterly to preclude (one would think) any misapprehension in the matter, for it is not a single



expression such as "all the world," which might be taken in a loose signification, but it is a great number of the very strongest expressions, all pointing to the one great truth, that an unparalleled and universal ruin overwhelmed the earth.

We may put in juxta position with this, the testimony of the inspired Apostle Peter. He says, speaking of the scoffers of the last days, (2 Pet. iii. 5, 6,) "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby," (*i.e.*, by which waters—the waters above, and the waters below,) "the world that then was," (in the original, the world as ordered and arranged by the hand of God,) "being overflowed with water, perished." The Apostle does not seem to have thought of a partial, but rather a general deluge. He says the world that then was, not a part of it, but the *world itself* perished. And the very comparison, which he institutes between the past destruction of the earth, and that which is yet future, confirms the conclusion as to the universality of the deluge. The earth is hereafter to be destroyed by a fiery conflagration, as it was once destroyed by a flood of waters. Who doubts the universality of the fiery baptism of the earth? Why then do men doubt the universality of the watery baptism?

But there is another circumstance worthy of special consideration in the estimation of this question, and that is, that if the deluge were only partial, there was no necessity for the construction of the ark. Forewarning of this approaching calamity had been given for one hundred and twenty years, at least there is strong reason for so thinking, and during that time, or towards the

latter end of it, God could have removed Noah and his family to a dry part of the earth, and so have preserved them from perishing in the waters; yea, those living contiguous to the parts not affected by the flood might have had opportunity to have escaped; whereas if the deluge were universal, leaving no dry spot in the earth, the ark was absolutely necessary for the preservation of the life of the chosen remnant, and none but those in the ark could escape that overflowing flood of waters.

There is therefore no reason for doubting the universality of the flood—on the contrary, every reason for believing it; and it is a matter of the greatest moment that our minds should be firmly established in the real truth of this great historical fact; for if geologists did not almost ignore, or treat very lightly, that most tremendous convulsion of nature, which, breaking up “the fountains of the great deep,” must have disturbed and dislocated the surface of the earth to an extent which no man can compute, with all the skilled lore, and scientific appliances of these latter days, they might find an explanation of many of the phenomena which they discover in their subterranean excavations, instead of propounding imaginative theories about the immense antiquity of created things, and making assertions with a confidence which could be warranted only by the rigid severity of a mathematical demonstration, or the certain dictation of the pen of inspiration.

With the exception of the special visitation here referred to, which has no parallel in the history of the world, the events of one generation are, with modification, the events of another, confirming the truth of what Solomon has written in his far-seeing wisdom, and com-

prehensive experience of human affairs, that there is nothing new under the sun. It is a prolonged iteration of human sin and human suffering ; moral, social, and physical disturbance. Sin there has been in the past, and sin there is now ; complicated sorrow and distress in the past, complicated sorrow and distress now ; ruin in the past, and ruin now.

But this word, RUIN, implies an antecedent state of perfection, which has been more or less impaired ; and, indeed, the contemplation of the evil that is in the world, moral and physical, would naturally suggest to the thoughtful mind, that things cannot be in that state in which they proceeded originally from the hand of creative wisdom and goodness. It is true, indeed, that very much of the suffering that is in the world, both of man and beast, proceeds from the wickedness and folly of man, and that if men acted with more of thoughtful wisdom and kindly benevolence, and followed more diligently the ways of virtue, there would be a great mitigation of suffering ; but it is certain, nevertheless, that no prudence, or care, or watchfulness, or moral discipline could altogether prevent it, or remove it, so that evil exists, and will exist, by an uncontrollable necessity, uncontrollable, that is, by any power of man. It is no less true and certain that man is born into the world with a corrupt nature, an innate tendency to evil, which develops itself with the physical and mental development of every human being ; so that we must conclude either that it was the original design of God that it should be so, or that, having been otherwise in the beginning, it became so through the force of some untoward circumstances ; but no one who is thoroughly persuaded of

the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, could reasonably believe that He originally established such an imperfect order of things, in which the evil immensely preponderated over the good. A skilled artificer on earth would be ashamed of the execution of a work which, when it left his hand, was marred by defects and imperfections ; though, if these defects and imperfections were produced by external causes, after he had completed his work in perfection, it would reflect no discredit on him : and can it be supposed that the great Architect of the Universe, who is excellent in wisdom and wonderful in working, and as the Moral Governor of His intelligent creatures, righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works, would institute an order of things, in which those intelligent creatures should be born in sin, and born to trouble, living in unhallowed opposition to their Maker all the days of their lives—afflicted, tormented, harassed with innumerable sorrows, and then passing away by death, their bodily part mouldering into dust in the decomposition of the grave ?

How could we possibly believe this? the more especially when we contemplate the Universe of God as far as it can come under human observation : the beautiful order and perfection of the heavenly bodies, in reference to which it is said in Holy Writ, “ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy-work ;” and when further we observe that, notwithstanding the disorder that is in the earth, there still remains so much of admirable beauty and perfect execution in the works of God, so much of sublimity, grandeur, and dignity, both in matter and mind, we cannot help concluding that that which appears imperfect, confused,

disordered was not originally so, but that it became so by the action of some evil cause, after God had given to it its last and beautiful finish.

But by the Revelation of God only can we certainly know the truth concerning this matter. Apart from that there could be only misty theories, in which nothing would appear clear and distinct. The mystery would remain unsolved, extrication from the labyrinth would be impossible. We should "find no end in wondering mazes lost."

Mere conjecture, however, is at an end, when the revelation of God throws its clear light upon the matter. The Word of the Divine inspiration informs us with certainty, what we might reasonably have anticipated, that in the beginning God made everything perfect in its kind—man, and four-footed beast, and creeping thing, the fowl of the air, and the fishes of the sea—and arrayed the earth with excellent beauty, and blessed it, and rejoiced in the work of His own hands: for He saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.

The narrative contained in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis is brief and simple, yet majestic in its very simplicity. It teaches not only that God created all things in the beginning, that He arranged and established everything in the earth in beautiful perfection, but also, that while He could have done everything in a moment of time, in the twinkling of an eye, He was pleased nevertheless to employ a period of six days, proceeding in admirable and consecutive order from the inanimate to the animate: from the royal *Fiat* which called light into manifestation, to the estab-

lishment of a firmament to divide the waters from the waters ; from the outspreading of the firmament to the separation of sea and dry land ; thence to the production of all vegetable life on the earth ; thence to the clear and regular manifestation of solar, lunar, and stellar light, so necessary for the growth of the vegetable world ; thence to the exhibition of the animal kingdom—first the fishes, then the fowl, then the beasts of the earth, and reptiles, and last of all, man, made in the image and likeness of his glorious Creator. Oh ! what a narrative is this ! We read it, and read it a thousand times, and there is an everlasting freshness in it, bringing the soul into sublime contact with the power, the wisdom, the goodness, and the holiness of God.

But how has its beauty been marred by the vain theories of geologists ! throwing darkness over what is light, and introducing uncertainty into that which was intended to instruct man certainly, even to the latest generations, as to the earliest beginnings of creation, and the manifestation of God's glorious perfection in the primeval arrangement of our earth.

Instead of accepting the simple statement of the divinely-inspired writer, that God made the heaven and the earth in six days, they have determined, to their own satisfaction at least, that the days here spoken of cannot mean six literal or natural days, but extended periods of duration, it may be each a thousand years, or ten thousand, as if the work were too great for the Almighty to accomplish in the brief terms of six literal days.

This, however, is a point of such great importance that it is worth while to give to it a more extended notice.

The advocates of the theory adverted to lay great stress on the fact, that the word "Day" is often used in Scripture, as well as in common conversation, in an indefinite sense to signify a lengthened period of duration. No one would for a moment think of denying the truth of this. The word is so used—repeatedly so used. But the question is, and it is a question of great moment, in what sense is it used in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis—literal or figurative?

Now, if in any part of Scripture we are to look for the literal meaning of it, one would think it would be when it first occurs in the sacred narrative, where that narrative professes to declare the beginning of things created, and to teach what otherwise we could not have known, or known most imperfectly, and where there seems to be a precision of meaning given to it by the expression, "The evening and the morning were the first day."

For the figurative use of the word in the Prophetical Scriptures (if it be so used in them) a sufficient reason may be assigned. There is always a shaded light around the subject of prophecy. It is not the design of God that men should see future things, while yet future, with the same clearness and distinctness as those things which have passed, or are present; but rather, that when the events foretold come to pass, they may recognize the finger of God, and trace His handwriting in the word of prophecy.

It is different with regard to history. History should always be clear. It cannot be too clear. It is intended to show us things that have been, to trace, as far as may be, their consequences, that from the record of the past, we may gather wisdom and instruction for the future.

Now what was the design of Moses in writing the first chapter of the Book of Genesis? Was it not manifestly to teach man, that God is the Creator of the universe; that the "worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things that do appear:" and more than this, that though God could have arranged every thing in a moment of time, yet He was pleased to occupy a period of duration, which Moses describes as six consecutive days, developing His plans by successive advances towards perfection, until at last He brings man into the beautiful earth which He had prepared and arranged for him.

The design of Moses was therefore not to throw a veil over the past—there had been an impenetrable veil if the history had never been written—but rather to lift the veil, that we might see and understand, believe, wonder, and adore.

As St. Luke wrote his gospel, that Theophilus might know the certainty of the Christian religion, so Moses wrote the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, that we might have a certain record of the works of God in creation.

Is it then antecedently probable that in describing the order and arrangement of creation, the sacred historian would have used a word calculated to mislead all generations of mankind, until geological philosophers should arise in these last days to inform us that the word "DAY" does not mean a literal day, but an extended period of time, an indefinite period?

And what object could there be in his thus writing so as to mislead mankind? If a period of six thousand years, or sixty thousand had been occupied instead of



six natural days, why could not Moses have told us so ? He does not hesitate to tell us of the immense age of Adam, nine hundred and thirty years, or the still more advanced age of Methuselah, nine hundred and sixty-nine years. Would it not have been just as easy to write high numbers in the first chapter, as in the fifth chapter of the Book of Genesis ? His not doing so could not have arisen from a desire to fall in with any popular apprehension of things, as in the case of Joshua bidding the sun to stand still, because, though to the eye of sense the sun seems to move ; yet, to the eye of sense the world does not appear to have been created in six days more than in sixty thousand years.

It is therefore scarcely conceivable that Moses, being divinely inspired to record the truth, should have written six days, if the period occupied had been six thousand years, or any longer duration of time. What object could there be ?

It may be objected, however, that the word DAY is used in an indefinite sense in the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis, where it is written, " These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the DAY that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens ; " and that therefore it is not a strained or inconsistent interpretation to assign the same meaning to it in the first chapter. Nevertheless, it is both strained and inconsistent ; for it is the great object of the sacred writer in the first chapter, and in the three earlier verses of the second chapter, to direct attention not only to the great work of creation, but also to definite sections of time in which the operations of God were carried forward ; but there is no such object

in the second chapter, beginning from the fourth verse ; and therefore, while we may without hesitation take the word indefinitely in the latter case, we cannot so interpret it in the former.

Now, if in the first chapter of Genesis we take the word DAY in the simplicity of its natural meaning, the narrative is suggestive of beautiful truth. Creation was not arranged in a moment of time, because God would exhibit it in the beauty and order of gradual development, as in the unfolding of the bud to the perfection of the blossom ; and yet in a comparatively short time, that man might not think of God, as if He needed, like the creature, lengthened duration for the elaboration of His work, as if He fainted under the magnitude of the operation, for “the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary.”

But if we take the word DAY in an enlarged sense to signify many days, or a lengthened period of duration, may we not with equal reason take the word MAN, in the same chapter, to signify a plurality of men, and so assert that God, instead of making the one man at the first, made thousands, and tens of thousands ? and doubtless, as the former falls in with the theories of geologists, so the latter would be a solution of the difficulties of ethnologists touching the races of mankind. But further, we may reasonably inquire, if such prolonged stretches of duration were necessary for the development of the inferior creation, what length of time was necessary for the formation and development of the body of man, with all its most marvellous and exquisite organization ? A thousand or ten thousand years ? But if we are so to deal with this holy revela-

tion, and so to interpret that which is written, what certainty can attach to this record of creation, and what value is there in this first chapter of the Book of Genesis?

Behold, as read in the light of its beautiful simplicity, it has instructed thousands. It has lifted their hearts in adoring wonder to God, the Creator of heaven and earth, "the Framers of the light and dark." It has drawn forth the secret admiration of the souls of the righteous in all generations, and filled them with profoundest reverence of the depth of the wisdom and knowledge, the power and goodness of God. But if once we admit the assertions and suggestions of geologists, all its light and beauty have departed; it becomes dark and confused, as the primeval chaos itself.

If a further refutation of the geological theory be required, it is supplied by what is contained in the fourth Commandment, written in the twentieth chapter of the Book of Exodus. If we really believe the table of the law to be a communication given from God to the children of Israel, and transmitted to succeeding generations by the hand of Moses, as the accredited minister of God, we cannot hesitate to accept the declaration contained in it. It is not necessary to quote verbatim a commandment with which all persons are familiar; but let it be remembered, that there are two clauses in it, namely, the commandment itself, and the special reason assigned for its observance. Both in the former and in the latter, the expression, "six days," occurs. How are we to interpret this? Shall it be said, that in the first clause the expression, "six days," means six literal days, but in the latter,

six figurative days ? Would that be a consistent, a sustainable interpretation ? Is it one that would commend itself, either to the erudite judgment or the common sense judgment of anyone whose intellect was not warped by a geological bias ?

Besides this, it is very hard to perceive how the fact of God having made the heavens and the earth in six thousand or ten times six thousand years, and then rested for a period of duration parallel to one of the preceding periods, should be a reason for man working six literal days, and resting the seventh day, any more than for his working six literal hours, and then resting every seventh hour.

Six days shalt thou labour, and rest on the seventh ; for in six days God made heaven and earth, and rested the seventh. What can be plainer ? How can truth be presented with greater simplicity, even to the mind of a child ?

“ Thus shalt thou do,” says the Word of God, issued by God Himself on the Mount Sinai. “ Thus shalt thou do ;” and the revolutions of the weeks with their working days, and their days of rest, are an everlasting memento from one age to another, from one generation to another—that in six days God made the heaven and the earth, and rested on the seventh day from all His work, which He had created and made.

The importance of the literal interpretation cannot be overstated. Let it once be surrendered, and it will be impossible to maintain against a cavilling sceptic the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God. For if the simple narrative of creation in the Book of Genesis can be explained away, in defiance of all

principles of interpretation applicable to a history, much more a doctrine which involves the profoundest and most startling mystery which can be presented to the human mind ; and the same may be said of every distinctive doctrine of the Christian religion. Such loose interpretation throws doubt and discredit on the whole Bible, insinuates uncertainty into every special revelation of God, and shakes the very foundation of the Christian's faith.

It is, therefore, matter of profound regret that many eminent Christians, and particularly Christian ministers, should hastily accept a geological theory, instead of adhering with the tenacity of an unyielding faith, to the certain testimony of Bible truth. Is it not retiring in unreasonable fear from a position of impregnable security to a quicksand of uncertainty, where there is no firm footing ?

We are not indeed called upon to deny facts which have been ascertained by scientific research ; but we need not rush with headlong impetuosity to embrace the inferences hastily deduced from those facts. Many of the difficulties suggested arise from imperfect knowledge and insufficient investigation, as in the natural world objects often appear distorted, and are misapprehended, because they are seen in a misty and dubious light ; but as soon as brighter and clearer light shines upon them, the misapprehension is corrected. Doubtless it will be so ultimately with regard to Bible statements and scientific observation : for the Bible is not at variance with any of the operations of God in nature : and thus the sacred writers are ever appealing to the wonderful works of creation, in the detail of their endless variety, as illus-

trating the power, and wisdom, and majesty of the ever-glorious God. It is not our wisdom, then, proudly to call in question, or by subtilty to explain away, what has been written by the dictation of God, but to accept with all humility the record of creation, as given in the Bible, both as regards the successive stages of the Divine operation, and the defined period in which they were fulfilled.

Thus, then, as Moses declares, "The heavens and earth were finished, and all the host of them," not as man often finishes his work, leaving it full of blemishes and imperfections. There was no blemish, no fault, no imperfection in the work of God. With satisfaction He surveyed it, (speaking after the manner of men,) He rejoiced in the work of His hands, for every thing He had made was very good. Every thing perfect in its kind; the earth clothed with light and verdure, a beautiful world in the universe of God; and in that lovely earth there was, as it were, a centre of beauty like a brilliant jewel in a setting of most precious gold—there was a garden planted in Eden by the Lord God, wherein grew every tree that was good for food and pleasant to the sight—all herbage to delight the eye and fill the heart with admiration in contemplation of the endless variety of the beautiful, in tree, and shrub, and flower; nor was there wanting the harmony also of ten thousand delicious sounds of nature to regale and to entrance the heart—every thing bright, every thing attractive, beautiful animals, lovely birds, the air filled with the voice of endless song, and the cloudless sky spread out in the heavens above; and at the head of all, man in his royal dignity, man in the perfection of his moral nature,

undefiled in body and soul; and the woman in the loveliness of her softer nature, the brightness of heaven sparkling in her eye, and the sum and perfection of most attractive beauty in her face—meet companions for one another, and both holy companions of Him who created them. What wonder that the Scripture speaks of the rapture of the angels of God, as they contemplated the glorious work of the great Creator in its faultless majesty of perfection, “The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”

Alas! that the beauty of that fair scene should fade! that a dark cloud should overshadow the bright prospect! that the frown of Jehovah’s displeasure should sadden that which the light of His countenance had made glad, and supersede the perfection of joy with the deep gloom of sorrow—take away the blessing, and leave a withering curse behind!

The perfection of that magnificent creation was but short-lived. There came an enemy and spoiled it all. Tempted by that enemy, our first parents sinned against their Creator and Benefactor, and by one foolish, ungrateful, unjustifiable act of transgression, laid the world in ruin.

The history of all this is briefly recorded in third chapter of the Book of Genesis. Two remarkable trees the Lord God had planted in the garden of Eden. The one the tree of life; the other the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. To eat of all the trees in the garden, free permission was given to Adam. Only the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was reserved, and reserved under the most solemn saction—“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Of that

tree man did eat in defiance of the Divine prohibition, alas ! with the most disastrous results.

And thus it came to pass. "The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden ? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden : but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die : for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her ; and he did eat."

Thus was the primeval transgression consummated, and the seed sown that was to bear the bitter fruit of sorrow and death through untold generations.

The temptation to disobey the holy precept of God, which was presented by the enemy of man to our first parents, was similar to that which has been suggested times without number to the posterity of Adam in all the varied phases of human life and diversified circumstances in which mankind are placed, whether in childhood, youth, or manhood, in prosperity or adversity, riches or poverty, in solitary retirement, or in the many social relationships of life.

First the Tempter said—No evil will result from the



disobedience; yet he put it not in that blunt and startling way; for the very suggestion of disobedience might have defeated his object; but he said, perhaps, with an utterance full of astonishment, as if God could have given such a charge, and annexed such a penal consequence, "Ye shall not surely die;" peradventure, he insinuated that it was a mistake, that our first parents had misapprehended what their Creator had said; but with whatever seductive blandishment of speech the thing was managed, the object was simply to persuade the innocent that no harm would result from the act of transgression: "Ye shall not surely die."

But that was not enough to make the temptation successful. Why should Eve run any possible risk? Why should she go against what she understood to be a Divine prohibition, if no substantial advantage was to be derived? Therefore the Tempter proceeded to point out a positive benefit which would result: "But God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." He spake part truth, and part falsehood. It was indeed true that they should know good and evil; but he hid from the woman the fact that it should be to their bitter cost. In that thing he deceived her.

And it was this which prevailed with the woman. When she saw that the tree was good for food, no objection therefore on that ground, and pleasant to the eye, the very look of it gratifying to the sense, and further, a tree to be desired to make one wise, and as she believed, in increasing wisdom, increasing happiness also, she took of the fruit and did eat, and gave to her husband, and he did eat also.

The temptation was addressed both to the bodily appetite and the intellectual desire. No harm, no evil, no punishment, great present advantage. So it was with the primeval temptation. So it has been ever since.

Present gratification in following that which is sinful, to the sensualist, to the drunkard, to the covetous, to the seducer, to the thief, to the liar, to the murderer, to the lover of pleasure more than to the lover of God, to the proudly ambitious, present gratification, delight, profit, honour, and no harm in the future. Even where the conscience is not altogether dead—even where the sensitive soul trembles at the possibility of future judgment, yet the Tempter insinuates, you can repent at a convenient season, which is only a modification of the impudent denial of God's judgment—of that divine sentence which has said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" for it says, you can repent after your present enjoyment, and so avert the judgment; you can have the present pleasure of sin, and escape its future consequence. Do not thousands believe it? Does not the primeval lie of Satan find immense credit in all the generations of mankind, from the beginning even to the present time? Faith only triumphs—faith in the Son of God, and the eternal verities connected with His holy mission.

The primal temptation was addressed to Eve as the weaker vessel. For the Tempter was wily, understood even then much of the constitution of human nature, though it had not been made manifest by experience, and therefore assailed it in the point in which he was most likely to succeed; in which, alas! he did succeed.

The woman hearkened, believed, acted on the suggestion of Satan, fell, sinned against God.

Probably the temptation had it been presented to Adam immediately, would have failed. This seems to be intimated by the word of Scripture, which says, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." But the temptation came to him in another form through the woman, and therefore, as Milton has suggested, he must have been drawn into assent and consent through his love to Eve. Probably, he perceived at once the fatal error she had committed, the grievous transgression into which she had fallen, and chose rather to sin with her in the intensity of the love which he bore to her, rather than stand alone and see her perish in her transgression, forgetting for a moment, a fatal moment, in the excited impulse of fond affection, before reason could control it, the paramount love, duty, and obedience which he owed pre-eminently to Him who created him, and gave him his lovely partner to be the companion of his undefiled innocence, and not of guilty rebellion against God.

There are hard questions which naturally suggest themselves in connection with this solemn history—a history with which every child of man is intimately and mysteriously connected through all generations; and although these questions cannot be answered so satisfactorily as to leave no room for further questioning, nevertheless they may not be unworthy of thoughtful and serious consideration and reflection; neither should they be considered in the aspect of vain questions, which are altogether unprofitable, like those to which St. Paul refers in some of his Epistles; for whatever throws light,

even though faint and feeble, on the ways and works of God, and enables us to apprehend them in some measure, though dimly and in a shadowy form, is not altogether unprofitable, even as it was not unprofitable to contemplate the shadows of the Law, and gather from them somewhat of the mysteries of the Holy Gospel. In fact, there is hardly any question connected with the ways of God, and the operations of His moral government, which may not be meditated upon with some advantage, if only it be done with humility of mind, and not with pride of intellect, as if man could by any effort search out the ways of God. Even where all appears dark, mysterious, inextricable, unfathomable, yet it is good to lift the thoughts to these things, if it be only to lead the mind of the holy worshipper of God to the rapturous utterance of adoring wonder in the grand words of inspiration—"O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out." "Verily thou art a God that hidest Thyself."

One hard question connected with the subject of Eve's temptation is this: how it came to pass that she could have believed the lie of the enemy rather than the truth of the Creator? If she had been a fallen creature, if like her posterity she had been conceived in iniquity, and born in sin, then the matter had been divested of much of its difficulty, because it is a sad certainty that sin darkens the understanding, and estranges the affections from God, and predisposes to actual transgression, especially in a matter in which the desires of the heart are strongly engaged. But this could not apply to Eve.

She had been fashioned by her Creator in immaculate purity. Her understanding was not darkened, neither was her heart perverted. She had not, indeed, experience to guide her, solemn and sad experience to warn her of the evil of sin ; but then she had the holy premonitory commandment of God. She must have had a clear perception that God was the author and finisher of creation ; that in "Him she lived, and moved, and had her being." She could not have been insensible to the bountiful goodness that supplied her wants to overflowing, and brightened her earliest footsteps in the earth with the unclouded light of most benignant happiness. How then could she for a moment believe the word of an enemy, and doubt the testimony of God her creator ?

But may it not have been that she did not know that it was an enemy that was speaking to her ? If it were Satan, yet it was in the form of one of the beasts which the Lord God had made, which was associated with her in the holy Paradise, one of those very beasts which the Lord God beholding had pronounced to be good. It is in the highest degree probable that she was quite unconscious that an enemy was at hand. But then there was the commandment. She knew it perfectly well, for she said in reply to the inquiry of the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden : but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." She therefore knew the commandment ; and yet while the enemy tempted, it is not impossible, nor even beyond what is probable, that she may have conceived, either that she had misinterpreted what God had said, or else that a message was sent by the serpent, superseding the former direction.

If we had the full details of the conversation which passed on the occasion, of which probably we have only the substance, much of the apparent difficulty might be removed, and we might then more easily understand how it was that she was induced to hearken to the voice of the Tempter.

As to the suggestion that she might have thought that the first commandment of God had been superseded by a second, there is a case in Scripture which seems to be strikingly parallel to such a view of the matter.

A man of God had come from Judah to denounce divine judgment against the wicked King Jeroboam, who had corrupted God's people. A special charge was given by the Lord to that man of God to eat no bread in the place to which he had gone, nor to drink water there, nor to return by the same way by which he came; and so, when Jeroboam, humbled by the manifest judgment of God, asked him to return to his house, and to refresh himself, he refused, pleading the commandment of God; yet afterwards, when a prophet, in the guise of a friend, but uttering lies in the name of the Lord, asked him to return, saying, "I am a prophet also, as thou art; and an angel spake to me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water," the man of God hearkened, and did as the Prophet bade him. But judgment came upon him, nevertheless, for his transgression. But why? Did he not think that the prophet spake in the name of the Lord? Did he not therefore think that the former commandment was superseded? Be it so. Yet he was inexcusable before God. But wherefore? Because he had himself received a special

tion, and so to interpret that which is written, what certainty can attach to this record of creation, and what value is there in this first chapter of the Book of Genesis?

Behold, as read in the light of its beautiful simplicity, it has instructed thousands. It has lifted their hearts in adoring wonder to God, the Creator of heaven and earth, "the Framers of the light and dark." It has drawn forth the secret admiration of the souls of the righteous in all generations, and filled them with profoundest reverence of the depth of the wisdom and knowledge, the power and goodness of God. But if once we admit the assertions and suggestions of geologists, all its light and beauty have departed; it becomes dark and confused, as the primeval chaos itself.

If a further refutation of the geological theory be required, it is supplied by what is contained in the fourth Commandment, written in the twentieth chapter of the Book of Exodus. If we really believe the table of the law to be a communication given from God to the children of Israel, and transmitted to succeeding generations by the hand of Moses, as the accredited minister of God, we cannot hesitate to accept the declaration contained in it. It is not necessary to quote verbatim a commandment with which all persons are familiar; but let it be remembered, that there are two clauses in it, namely, the commandment itself, and the special reason assigned for its observance. Both in the former and in the latter, the expression, "six days," occurs. How are we to interpret this? Shall it be said, that in the first clause the expression, "six days," means six literal days, but in the latter,

yet allowed an enemy to enter the holy Paradise, and establish a most dangerous temptation on that very prohibitory precept. Would a kind and loving Father put the child of his affection into circumstances of temptation, involving the serious risk of defection from the paths of virtue? Yet did God suffer Adam, whom the Scripture calls the son of God, to be placed in the jeopardy of a most dangerous temptation.

But we must remember what the Scripture says, speaking in the name of the Lord, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts; neither are your ways My ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Therefore, even if we could offer no approximate solution of the difficulty, still we ought to say, with the meek submission of a creature, and the unanswering docility of a child, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

But the thing is, even to human apprehension, intelligibly good. We must wisely bear in mind, that God stands towards us and His intelligent creatures generally, not only in the relation of a Father, but also that of Creator and moral Governor. He is the moral Governor of moral creatures, that is, creatures formed in His moral as well as His intellectual image. But how is a moral creature distinguished from all other living creatures whom the Lord God has formed? Is it not in this, that while the latter instinctively obey the laws impressed upon them—by the very necessity of their nature obey those laws—the moral being renders obedience to the divine law, either written in his heart or communicated to him by positive precept, from a higher and



more dignified motive power, namely, the concurrent action of his will, intelligently, gratefully, and lovingly, with the will of God, in the assured persuasion that all which God enjoins is holy, just, and good? He obeys not with impulsive instinct, but with the rational conviction of the fitness of obedience. He has power to obey, but he has power also to disobey, that his obedience "should not be, as it were, of necessity, but willingly;" and it is this very thing that lifts him into a position immeasurably higher than any creature of God that is not so endowed. Howbeit, this very gift, so sublime, excellent, and admirable, may bring with it, and probably does, the necessity of temptation, in some cases short, in others of more prolonged duration, and perhaps oft repeated, according to circumstances. Yes; the necessity of temptation, for otherwise how shall it be made manifest, not to God, who knoweth all things, even the constitution and the most secret working of the human heart, but before an intelligent universe, that these moral beings differ from others, and that they are not obedient to the divine laws by blind impulsive instinct, but by the principle of holy love, and in the exercise of freedom of will, choosing voluntarily the way of obedience rather than that of disobedience.

We may, therefore, take for granted, as a scarcely questionable truth, that every moral being whom the Lord God has formed, has been subjected to some process of temptation before he was established in a state in which danger of defection from virtue no longer existed. We read of fallen angels, and the elect angels. Is there any reason to doubt that both the one and the

other were tempted, and that the temptation resulted in the painful revolt of the former from obedience, and in the everlasting stability of the latter ?

Nor ought we to overlook this, that temptation, successfully resisted, brings out true nobility of character, and places the victor in a more distinguished and honourable position, than he could have occupied if he had never been tempted. So it was with Abraham, when tried in the matter of offering up his son. He obeyed the divine command. The integrity of his character, and the steadfastness of his faith, and his unwavering compliance with the will of God, have made him illustrious through all generations, in a way in which he would not have been, if not exposed to that particular temptation.

So, also, in the case of the patriarch Job. How should we have known the triumph of his faith, and the majesty of his patience, and the upright steadfastness of his heart towards God, and the falsehood of the malignant insinuation of his enemy, if he had never been exposed to severe and distressing trial ?

We may understand, therefore, why it was that God permitted Adam, whom He had created holy and unspotted, in the image of God, to be tempted. He was a moral being, and must needs go through that process to which every moral being must be subjected, that it might be made manifest whether he would obey from the heart that holy commandment which had been delivered to him. True it is that God knew what would be the result, knew all the evil that would ensue, and could, in the exercise of His power, have prevented it all ; but it was consistent with His goodness, never-

theless, to allow the temptation to proceed, for He had given to Adam a power to obey, or to disobey the commandment, and for the exercise of that power he was responsible to God.

It is in vain for any to contend against this, and say, as some have said, that Adam had no power to resist, and if he had no power, how could he be responsible? But why should the existence of such a power be doubted any more than the innate power which man possesses to move his hand, or move his foot, or change his position, and remove from one place to another? True it is, that in a certain sense no one can act independently of God. The very motion of our members is not without God. But it is not necessary to suppose that in these cases there is a distinct intervention of the power of God, but rather that the Creator lodged a power in man in the day of his creation, which within certain limits man can exercise, or forbear from exercising.

To suppose, as some have supposed, that it was the predetermined purpose of God that Adam should fall, in order to the development of judgment and grace resulting from the fall, is not only to advance a theory for which there is no foundation in any testimony of Holy Scripture, but also it is to cast a dishonourable reflection on the character of God. Rather we may apply to the case what St. Paul says of the Jews in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans—"Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but, rather, through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles." Was Adam exposed to temptation that he should fall? God forbid: but rather, by his fall

the character of God is made manifest in a way in which otherwise it might not have been revealed.

There is no reason to doubt that there was a beautiful and admirable plan in the Divine mind in connection with the maintained innocency of Adam, which would have been developed if he had never sinned, but which, because of his transgression, never has been made manifest as an actual thing, though peradventure it may hereafter be exhibited by God to His redeemed ones as in a picture, or a series of illustrative pictures, or it may be in another order of beings constituted similarly to Adam, evoking wonder, admiration, and delight, as the primal settlement of creation drew forth the rapturous applause of the sons of God ?

It cannot indeed be denied that God could have sustained Adam in grace without interfering with the freedom of will, just as often since He has sustained His servants in times of fiery trial and temptation. Yes; but the time of grace had not then arrived. Every thing falls out, according to the divine arrangement, in the appointed season. First, law in its exactness ; then grace in its free manifestations. But till the transgression entered with its penal consequences there could be no grace. If since the memorable fall of our first parents, many have been sustained by grace, more sharply and severely tempted than they, let it not be forgotten that it has been because they lived and are living under a dispensation of grace ; whereas Adam lived, at least in the Paradisaical state, under law, and not under grace.

It was the fall of our first parents which brought into manifestation that wonderful order of things in the moral government of God, in which grace appears in

such conspicuous beauty, hereafter to be more fully manifested, even to perfection, even to its consummated glory in the day of the Lord Jesus.

There is another question of some difficulty in connection with this mournful history, on which a passing notice may be bestowed. It has reference to the fact of the serpent speaking in articulate language to Eve. But then, that difficulty arises from the fact that none of the brute creation in our day have the faculty of language, nor in any period of the world's existence, as far as we are instructed by the record of history, the solitary exception in the case of Balaam's ass being evidently of a miraculous nature, a momentary power to speak having been communicated by God to the animal, that the madness of the prophet might be rebuked by one of the meanest of God's creatures; but it would be an unwarrantable inference to conclude that such a power was not possessed in Paradise by some of the more advanced creatures of God. In the brute creation, even now, there are some animals endowed with great sagacity, approaching very nearly to the possession of reason: yea, there seems little doubt that a process of reasoning goes on in the minds of some of them. People may choose to call it instinct, but it has nevertheless the element of a reasoning faculty. Besides this, it is a matter of certainty that many birds are quite capable of uttering articulate sounds to such an extent as to invest them with a very attractive interest.

It is not, therefore, believing anything very strange, or in the nature of things extremely improbable, to believe that, in Paradise, in the unfallen state, some of the more sagacious and highly-developed animals pos-

sessed a power of articulate language, not probably in the same advanced degree as Adam and Eve, yet sufficiently so to make known their wants by a definite mode of lingual communication.

There can be little doubt that after the fall, a considerable modification took place in the animal world, as in every department of nature, so that powers originally possessed were lost; and, on the other hand, faculties and inclinations were developed which did not originally exist, or, at least, exist in manifestation. When geologists assert that certain animals were formed of God to prey upon one another, drawing their inference from the configuration of those animals, and assume that it must have been so from the beginning, they might just as well say that man possesses—yea, every man that is born into the world possesses—certain propensities to evil which are invariably developed as life is developed, and thence infer that man was originally so created; but if we believe the Scripture as the revelation of God, instead of the inferences of men, though they be called men of science, we know certainly that it was not so with man in the beginning, and no less certainly that it was not God's original design that animals should prey one upon another, for the record of the Holy Scripture says, as the utterance of a royal ordinance of the Creator, "To every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth on the earth wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat."

After the fall a change took place; and without asserting that there was any new creation, yet, doubtless, there was such a modification of animal structure as to adapt

the brute creation to a new order of things. If God, in pronouncing judgment on the serpent, said, as the result of that judgment, "Upon thy belly thou shalt go, and dust thou shalt eat all the days of thy life," it is not a strained inference to assert that originally the serpent moved in some other way, peradventure he might have had the power of flying, like the fiery flying serpent referred to in the prophecies of Isaiah; and if so, some physical change must have taken place in that animal, and if in that animal, why not in others?

We may therefore not unreasonably conclude that in the original state of things, the subtle serpent had a gift of speech, and so the exercise of that faculty excited no surprise in Eve, nor warned her of the existence of danger. As to the permission granted to Satan to enter into the serpent in the sinless Paradisaical state, that is a subject which must be assigned to that class of insoluble difficulties which stand connected with the origin of evil.

It is probable that the temptation of our first parents occurred at a very early period of their life; perhaps on the very threshold of their existence, even as our Lord's temptation was in the very beginning of His ministerial life, and before He entered on that work for which He came into the world.

It would certainly have exasperated, if anything could do it, the bitter anguish of the fall, if Adam and Eve had been long in the enjoyment of their Paradisaical blessedness; and so it may have been a kindness on the part of their Creator to subject them very early to the temptation appointed to them, that they might feel

somewhat less bitterly the misery of being thrust down from the high and happy and dignified position in which God had placed them. Had they one bright Sabbath? one holy, unblemished day of rest in that exquisite paradise of love and beauty? Did they on that hallowed day hold sweet communion with their great Creator, praising Him for His goodness, extolling Him for His greatness, and admiring His glorious and excellent works in all that was grand, sublime, and beautiful? or did they on that very Sabbath day turn aside from the holy commandment, and on the day of rest forfeit the rest of God?

Or could it have been, after the Sabbath was ended, just at the beginning of a new week, by the act of their transgression, inaugurating a new order of things in which the Creator began to work again, but in darkness and judgment, bringing in confusion, and cursing and sorrow and death, till after the lapse of ages, another far-off Sabbath should be ushered in—a Sabbath of endless duration, concluding and reversing all the terrible evil? But we cannot tell. The Scripture is silent, and we have no record to which we can appeal; but of this there can be little, if any doubt, that our first parents had taken but a few onward steps in their bright, fresh life before they stumbled and fell.

The consequences of that disastrous fall began to develop themselves immediately. Though the gifted author of the poem, "Paradise Lost," supposes the primary effect of eating the fruit of the forbidden tree to have been of a highly exhilarating nature, producing a momentary delusion in the minds of our first parents,



that they had done a good thing instead of an evil ; yet there is no intimation of this given in the sacred narrative. On the contrary it would seem as if the immediate effect was that their eyes were opened to a painful consciousness of their nakedness. They were filled at once with a guilty sense of shame. They sought to cover their nakedness ; “ And when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, they hid themselves from His presence among the trees of the garden.” They who before had walked with holy confidence in the presence of the Lord, and with joyfulness of heart, now shrank away under the overpowering oppression of guilty fear. Oh ! what a change ! oh, what a terrible retribution in a moment ! How distressing, unspeakably so—the change from conscious innocence and unfaltering confidence in the approbation of God to a conscience laden with guilt, and a repugnant feeling of dislike to meet the great Author of their being ! Thousands of their fallen posterity have repeatedly, under the terrors of a guilty conscience, rushed into the dark embrace of death, as if they could hide, in the solemn stillness and deep shadow of the grave, the anguish that in the light of life was intolerable to the wounded conscience.

If the punishment of that first sin had not gone beyond this, it were sufficient to justify the word of God by His holy prophet—“ Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee. Know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.”

But this was only the beginning of sorrows. That deed of transgression had been done which was to re-

produce itself, as from a seed whose vitality could never be destroyed, in manifold and innumerable phases of sin to a thousand generations; that deed of sinful revolt against God, unbelief, disobedience, ingratitude, and folly; that deed which could never be recalled; and the inquisition of God began immediately.

“Adam, where art thou?” It is the voice of the Creator, the voice of the righteous Judge. It is a voice that erewhile had filled the heart with rapturous emotions of joy and love. Now it fell upon the ear and awakened only sensations of alarm, and a distressing consciousness of unfitness to respond to that call, and come boldly into the presence of God, as a loving and approving Father. “Adam, where art thou?” And when the guilty exculpation of fear is uttered, “I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself,” it only led to another question of God, which brought out the guilt of Adam in all its nakedness. Known as it was to God, yet Adam is compelled painfully to confess it.

It is all in vain that the man throws the blame on the woman, and the woman transfers it to the serpent. All are guilty. Not one of them stands excused before God. But righteous judgment is pronounced by Him of whom it is written, “His work is perfect—a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He.”

The judgment begins with the Corrupter, descends from him to the woman, and then passes on with stern severity to the man, whom God had constituted the head of creation, and His royal vicegerent on the earth.

There is, as it were, a commingling of judgment in the case of the serpent and him who used that serpent

as an instrument. The creature is polluted before God by the entrance of the evil one into it, and is judged as a polluted creature. It is condemned to the degradation of a reptile, and to the refuse dust of the earth for its food. Nor is this inconsistent with the righteousness of God, for the original sin having been consummated, its consequences are visited, more or less, on every creature, and the serpent being involved in the general calamity suffers accordingly, and in the measure assigned by the just judgment of God. But from the serpent the judgment passes on to the principal who used that serpent as his instrument of an evil temptation. His power is continued for a season—the power and mastery which he had acquired by his victory over man—but it is prolonged in conflict, ultimately to be crushed by the seed of the woman, though, in the first instance, inflicting some lesser wounds upon that seed.

As to the woman, this was the judgment of God upon her: “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” It is quite evident from this that she was put into a more subordinate position than she had occupied before the fall, and so instead of rising to the dignity of a god, as Satan had suggested, she was brought down from that original dignity which the Creator had assigned to her. But beside this marked humiliation, her sorrow and her conception were to be greatly multiplied; her sorrow was to be great in each conception, and her conceptions were to be more frequent. According, indeed, to the generally-accepted interpretation, it means that God would greatly increase

her sorrow in her conception, and all things pertaining to the state of pregnancy, even as it has come to pass, and been confirmed in the reality of very solemn experience. But, according to the rendering in the authorized version, it would certainly intimate that the number of her children should be greatly multiplied, increased beyond what it would have been, if she had never sinned, and of course, not merely in reference to her individually, but through all successive generations of woman-kind, on whom undeniably the primeval curse has descended. And may it not be so? May not this be a mysterious result of the sin and folly of Eve? and may it not be that this supernumerary offspring, as they may be called for distinction's sake, over and above what would have sprung from the woman in her original innocence, represents the great mass of the ungodly, described as the seed of the serpent? What if it should appear in the winding up of all things that the number of the saved exactly tallies with the number of those who would have been born into the world if sin had never entered, to the utter frustration of the malice and evil-working of Satan? What if God in His sovereign purpose had predetermined, without any interference with the free action of moral agents, but by that mighty mysterious working whereby He worketh out the counsel of His will, while the ungodly are permitted to work out theirs to the utmost of their ability; what if God had predetermined that none of the royal race of mankind should perish, but that, though involved for a season in sin and suffering, and sharing with all the lamentable consequences of the lapse from original righteousness, they should be ultimately disentangled

from the mass of those who are denominated the seed of the serpent, and who, like their head, stand out in perverse hostility to God and His righteous purpose, and of some of whom, though within the precincts of the professing Church of God, the Saviour said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do"—the separated ones constituting that godly seed, who are in mystical connection with the second Adam as their living covenant head, who, while He is the seed of the woman pre-eminently, is also the Lord from heaven. These, however, are things which, in the absence of the certain authority of a defined revelation, can only be adverted to suggestively, and not declared conclusively.

The fulness of the Divine judgment lights upon Adam as the head, because he hearkened to the voice of his wife, instead of hearkening to the voice of God. The ground therefore is cursed for his sake. Sorrow is appointed to him all the days of his life on the earth, laborious toil for his very subsistence, and ultimately decomposition into the dust of earth. And not only so, but the whole creation suffers in him. From father to son the evil descends—an endless complication of sorrows, and throughout all generations. The judgment is stern, severe, impressively awful, yet entirely vindicating the faithfulness of the divine warning, which said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

And thus the sin of our first parents has laid the world in ruin, introduced elements of evil and unspeakable disaster; sin multiplying itself, continually ex-

hibiting itself in endless phases of blasphemy," unrighteousness, impurity; and in the same proportion has sorrow been multiplied, even to bodily anguish, most cruel, bitter remorse intolerable, shame, dishonour, and death in darkest and most dreadful manifestation; sometimes creeping on by slow and torturing stages; sometimes coming in the shock of sudden violence; sometimes in the quick accumulation of war and pestilence, sweeping away thousands and tens of thousands, and filling every home with sorrow and lamentation. The whole creation has received a mighty shock in Adam. No earthquake ever brought such mischief; no tempestuous violence of the sea; no desolating hurricane leaving disaster, death, and ruin in its track. Every department of creation has been disturbed by that primeval sin; the body of man, the soul of man, families, communities, nations, the very elements, and the brute creation; as the Apostle has solemnly testified in the word of holy inspiration, writing in the Epistle to the Romans—"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." And he wrote that more than four thousand years after the sin of Adam; and since he wrote it, nearly two thousand years have passed by, and yet it is still the same. There is a disordered creation to this very day, and a widely-spread ruin.

Shall it be ever thus? Is the creation made subject to vanity, to all the evil that is involved in that comprehensive word? and is it without hope? No, no; it is not without hope, for the Scripture says, "Creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly," not as if it were a consenting party, not as if there were any inherent

fault in it originally, to lead to a natural and necessary deterioration, "but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." The Scripture says "in hope." Therefore there is hope of deliverance. Though, in the solemn judgment which God pronounced on Adam, there was no intimation of hope, yet there was in the judgment uttered against Satan, and the prophetic declaration of the victory of the woman's seed; and there was, also, in the fact of God clothing our first parents with the skins of animals. He clothed them, and covered the shame of their nakedness, intimating that He had not forsaken them utterly, that His love had not departed, never again to return; only it implied that never again will they or any of their posterity stand before God in the undraped nakedness of primeval innocence, but robed with heavenly vestments, when the light of the divine favour shall beam upon them again.

God has afflicted man for his transgression, even the whole race, but not for ever. Even as He said, when denouncing judgment on Solomon by the Prophet Ahijah, "I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever." There has been expulsion from Paradise, but there shall be re-admission. Access to the tree of life has been barred for a season, but free access shall be granted to it at a future time; for, though death hath reigned by one, life and immortality shall reign by another. There is ruin by the sin of man, but there shall be restoration by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is a brilliant star of hope on the brow of the eastern sky, precursor of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.



## CHAPTER II.

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Restoration—Probable from various Circumstances—The moral Condition of Man considered—Incorrect Estimate of it formed by some—The true Scriptural Doctrine—Restoration certain only from Divine Revelation.

**R**UIN!—Yes ; there is ruin—disastrous, as when some magnificent structure has been blasted by a bolt from heaven ;—ruin widespread, and extending through all departments of nature, in things moral and material : and it is not yet fully developed in its results. But there shall be restoration, great and marvellous. It is a grand futurity in the prospective of Creation. There is ruin because of sin. There shall be restoration because of grace. The beautiful edifice which God built has been damaged. It has been seriously and extensively injured ; but it shall be repaired—built up in all that is fallen—adorned and beautified. “The Top Stone shall be brought forth with shoutings” of joy, “crying, Grace, grace, unto it.” For of grace it is—all of grace—the whole work of restoration. The ruin is because of sin, through the righteousness of the law, which, though it work beautifully to peace and joy where there is no sin, yet, on the other hand, most disastrously unto death where there is



sin. But the restoration is of grace, which is not of the law, but which, ignoring human merit, issues spontaneously out of the heart of God to succour and save the lost. Hid, like a deep spring there, from all eternity, it has gushed in flowing abundance, "a well of water springing up unto everlasting life" in the incarnate Son of God.

Apart from divine revelation, there are grounds for expecting that there would be restoration, for, suppose it were otherwise, it would seem as if an enemy had prevailed against God. Behold, the Lord God made everything fair and bright and beautiful, and formed man in His own image, and gave him sovereignty over all created things in the world. But an enemy entered Paradise, and spoiled all. Has he spoiled it irreparably? Has he marred and corrupted that which was beautiful in its kind? Has he created irretrievable disaster?

But, what? Is not God most wise, most powerful, and infinite in loving-kindness? How then can an enemy prevail against Him? Is that enemy wiser than God? stronger than God? In his malice, mightier to destroy, than the goodness of God to save? What if God make the wrath and mischievous device of that enemy to praise Him and to redound to His glory? What if he permit the manifestation of it up to a certain limit, and then restrain the remainder of it, both in permission and restraint exalting His ever-blessed and eternal Name, causing the multitude of His creatures to cry, "Thou art glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders."

It would not, therefore, be unreasonable to infer, from the very character of God, that there might be restora-

tion full and perfect and glorious—yea, even that and the renovated creation should exceed in glory all that has been, even in the days of primeval beauty, when God beheld the work of His own hands, pronounced it good, and sealed it with His most benignant blessing ; just as the latter Temple in the Jewish history excelled in glory the first Temple, though in the beginning the appearance was most unpromising, and caused the hearts of the ancients to weep in anguish in painful remembrance of the past.

But, besides the inference suggested by a consideration of the character of God, there are other considerations, which render it by no means improbable—on the contrary, make it highly probable—that there will be restoration, and all this apart from the certain revelation of God on the subject. Though there is ruin, as has been said, of a widely-spread character, moral and material, yet it is not what would be expressed by the phrase, utter ruin. If it were utter and complete, we could hardly with propriety speak of restoration. There might be a new creation, but not properly restoration. But the ruin is not of such a nature as to leave no trace of pristine dignity, beauty, and glory. On the contrary, there is so much of the beautiful and bright still remaining, so much that is admirable, and attractive, and engaging, appealing to the eye, to the ear, to all the senses, the understanding, and the heart, that almost involuntarily we exclaim in our entranced contemplation, even of the ruined work of God, What must it have been in its original purity and loveliness !

Everyone who gazes on the face of nature in the physical creation, is impressed with the elements of the

grand, sublime, and beautiful meeting the eye, and awakening the pleased emotions of the heart at various points. Perhaps, as regards this matter, we are hardly justified in taking into account the glorious expanse of heaven, with all those shining wonders, which proclaim the majesty and glory of the Creator, because it might be said, and it could not with certainty be contradicted, that these things have not been contaminated and disordered by sin ; but even if we turn away from these, and fix our observations on the earth, which is the dwelling-place of man, who knows not that it is replenished with the magnificent and the beautiful ? There may be waste places, and sandy deserts, and wild uncultivated tracts that are characterized by a painful desolation and most unpleasing ruggedness ; there may be tempests, and earthquakes, and mighty commotions in the elements, which carry to the human mind the solemn impression of all that is awful and alarming, filling the heart with fear, as speaking in the stern accents of judgment, as the voice of the Almighty, " Be still, and know that I am God ;" but yet how much is seen to create in the human heart the emotions of the grand, attractive, and beautiful ; in the lofty mountain, in the rolling ocean, in the verdant plain, in the softly-flowing stream, in the majestic tree, in the beautiful flowers, in the waving corn-fields, in the grassy meadows, and in the endlessly diversified combination of these, forming a series of lovely landscapes, with infinite variety in the expression of each of them ; yea, and in confirmation of all this, the Scripture says, " The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord," and it says that of it, not in reference to what it was in the

beginning, before the blighting influence of sin had impaired its beauty, but, notwithstanding all the ravages of mischief, consequent upon man's transgression, and with all the awful manifestations of divine judgment from time to time—in spite of all these, yet still it is full of the goodness of the Lord; His goodness, even to the guilty.

And when we look at human nature in its fallen condition before God, it is not so fallen that every element of the good has been eliminated from it. It has been indeed the manner of some divines to speak of the fallen nature of man as if no trace of goodness were left in it by reason of the fall; but the picture which they paint of man, as a fallen creature, is such an one as would more properly represent a devil, in whom we suppose, and perhaps correctly, no trace of good remains.

But such a representation of man, as it is at variance with experience, experience in all ages, so neither is it asserted in the Word of divine inspiration; for let us consider what the Bible says in one of the strongest passages of Holy Writ, in connection with human guilt and depravity—and we may regard this as a combination of several testimonies of Scripture, teaching the same doctrine. It says, “There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are

swift to shed blood : destruction and misery are in their ways : and the way of peace have they not known : there is no fear of God before their eyes."

It is impossible to deny the severity of this testimony, touching the depravity of human nature. Stronger language than this could scarcely be used. And yet, what does it teach? And to what does this solemn and powerful testimony of the Word of God refer? Is it not to human nature in its relation to God? Manifestly so. It brings up that nature into the light of the Divine Perfection, and shows it to be utterly guilty before God. It is of great importance to observe, that the passage above cited treats of human nature in its complexity as a whole, and not according to its exact manifestation in each individual; for it is not true of each and every man, that his mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, nor of each and every one that his feet are swift to shed blood; but it means, that one sins in one way, and another in another way, and that the aggregate of the whole exhibits the fallen nature of man in a very dark and dreadful aspect. But as in a picture there are deeper shadows in some parts of it than others, so human nature, as a whole, is more darkly shaded in some parts than others, here and there exhibiting the comparative brightness of virtue, here and there, on the other hand, the thicker darkness of excessive moral corruption.

But there is nothing in all the strong statements of the Scripture just quoted to show that every trace of goodness has departed from human nature; that may be characteristic of the future, but not of the present; but only that the complex aspect of it is corrupt before

God. For, as in the system of Romanism, there is much that is good if considered by itself; and without relation to the whole as a system, and yet the complex of it is an utter corruption of the Christian religion; so it is with human nature, guilty as a whole, yet still retaining in certain aspects of it that which is good. And indeed we may infer as much from the very description of the tree, by the fruit of which, man eating thereof, sin was introduced into the world. It was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and so when our first parents had taken and tasted of the fruit of it, they became experimentally acquainted with good and evil, not only physical, but also moral; the poison through them being transmitted to every department of nature. Therefore, everywhere in the creation we see good and evil in combination—not all evil—not all good, but good and evil together. Why should human nature be an exception? but an exception it is not: for who knows not, that apart from the hallowing influences of our holy Christian religion, there are still remaining very bright virtues which are conspicuously manifested in many—honesty, and justice, and equity, and faithfulness, and kind-hearted benevolence? And these things have existed and appeared not only in those born within the precincts of the Christian covenant, but even among the heathen. Is not the voice of history continually repeating through successive ages the names of illustrious heathens who lived before the Christian era; who knew nothing of the elevating power and influence of revealed religion? and yet they were distinguished by virtues which have won the undying admiration of all ages. Was not Aristides surnamed the Just? Was not

Socrates renowned for his wisdom and virtue? Did they not call Plato the Divine, because of the stretching out of his soul in its earnest graspings after immortality? Is not the name of Demosthenes ever memorable in the generations of mankind, not only for intellectual endowments, but for moral qualities—orator, statesman, patriot; brave, virtuous, incorruptible, in all things exhibiting the fine gold of human nature with a minimum of its baser alloy? Shall it be said that there was nothing good in these men? Can it be so said? What! was it all corruption and evil? Had every trace of man's original moral dignity departed from them? Had their souls, especially the moral part of them, become an utter ruin? Surely it is not so. The elements of good remained in them, and there is nothing in holy Scripture, rightly understood, to contradict this. What the Scripture really teaches is—not that there is nothing of what is in its nature good remaining in man—but that the man, as a whole, is not good before God. He has fallen from perfection. He is not good. No—not of one of those distinguished men of ancient times can it be affirmed that he is good. For of every man it is certain that he is guilty in the sight of heaven. He has sinned. He has broken the law—the perfect law, the holy law, the law of which it is said, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from it till all be fulfilled, and therefore he cannot stand, be his virtues among men never so eminent, in the position of one who has kept the law. He is evil and not good before God. And this is the import of that remarkable saying of St. James, “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all;” that is, he is

as truly a guilty man for that one act of disobedience as if he had violated all the commandments, though not of course to the same extent. But contrasting together guilt and innocence, he is not innocent, but guilty. That, however, does not carry with it the assertion, that he has not done good in keeping the rest of the commandments, only that imperfect obedience cannot secure acceptance with God. In his complexity as a man, he is not good before God. Look at the case of the rich ruler in illustration of this. That man had kept all the Commandments of the Second Table from his youth up, and for his virtue and morality Jesus loved him, regarded him with kindly approbation. But he fell short before God. He was not good when brought up to be examined in the searching brightness of the Divine Perfection. He was deficient; weighed in the balance, he was found wanting.

It may be said, indeed, that the statement of St. Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans, eighth verse, is at variance with the position here advanced. There the Apostle says—"I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." But is it really in contradiction? What did St. Paul mean by that statement? Did he use that phrase, "good thing," relatively or absolutely? Relatively, without doubt. Certainly he did not intend to affirm that every sentiment of religion and virtue was wanting in him before he was converted to God. Did he not say in the presence of the Jewish Council, "I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day?" And did he not in that refer, not merely to the life which he lived as a Christian, but also to that which he lived before he became a Christian?



It is evident, therefore, that he used that expression in the seventh chapter of Romans relatively to the perfection of God, and justification in His sight: There is nothing good in me to recommend me to God, or to merit His approbation, who requires perfection, not in this or that particular thing, but in the whole man. So far from contradicting what has been advanced, this passage of Scripture rather confirms it.

This then is the true doctrine of the Bible, that though that which is good has not altogether been eradicated from the moral part of man, any more than has been an utter destruction either of his intellectual powers or his corporeal capabilities, yet, standing as a man in relation to the holy law of God, he is not righteous; he is not good; he is very far gone from original righteousness; his heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, according to the testimony of the holy prophet; it has in it the elements of all imaginable wickedness, though, from the power of restraining circumstances, it may not come forth into practical activity; but, nevertheless, he is not so utterly ruined and corrupted as to be incapable of restoration.

It is, indeed, possible that a deteriorating process may go on until every element of good is utterly eliminated. Alas! painful experience shows that this process of increasing degradation does go on. How many have started on a bright career with high-toned moral principle, giving encouraging promise of successful progress through life, and yet by reason of the corruption that is in the world through lust, and the element of evil within their own heart, they have fallen step by step into lower and lower depths of human guilt, till all that

was bright and lovely in their character in the morning prime seems to have departed from them before the shadows of the last scene have settled down upon them ; and yet it is probable that as long as the period of this mortal life lasts, every vestige of good is not utterly obliterated. That may be reserved as a terrible consummation for a future state.

Now the substance of that which has been stated is this—The earth, with all the inhabitants thereof, and all that appertains to this world, is in a fallen condition ; in a lower state than that which was originally assigned to it : and this is specially true with regard to the moral part of man ; but the whole, nevertheless, capable of restoration, as capable of being brought back to order and beauty and grace and perfection as the original chaos, under the moulding hand of God, and by the mighty power of His Spirit.

It has been said that there are circumstances which render it highly probable, independently of the divine revelation on the subject, that there will be a future restoration, though the period may be yet far distant, as far removed in the future from our own time, as our time is distant from the primeval disturbance of creation by the entrance of sin, or farther.

With reference to individual persons, we observe such not unfrequently rising out of deep degradation into a high position of virtue under moral culture and training, becoming the ornament and grace of society, whereas before they were the bane of it, showing thus a recuperative power in the moral part of our nature when roused by strong motives, and the correction of sound and virtuous education. Even those who are defective

in ordinary intellect, and called idiots, because unprofitable to their fellow-men in the isolation of their existence—even such being placed under careful, moral, and intellectual training, have made both in the former and latter an advance and development which might have been thought antecedently to be impossible. Circumstances such as these make the restoration of man to a state of perfection, a thing, to say the least, not altogether improbable. But taking a wider range of observation, looking off from individuals to the general aspect of things in connection with communities and nations, the probability of restoration becomes stronger still, increasing to the degree of that which is highly probable, if not so in the highest degree.

Such highly probable evidence of a restoration in the future is found in the gradual advance of civilization in all its details, from the beginning up to the present time: such gradually-advancing civilization having a natural tendency in its development to promote the prosperity and temporal interests of mankind—raising what is low, enlightening what is dark, controlling what is violent, softening what is harsh.

“*Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes  
Emollit mores, nec sinet esse feros.*”

There were nations of ancient days who unquestionably made great advances in what concerned the material prosperity of man. With much of evil intermingling, yea, with a preponderance of evil, there was, nevertheless, much that was good, and great, and dignified; much that was calculated to command admiration in the nations; much that contrasted most favourably

with the deep degradation of those parts of the earth which lay outside the resuscitating influences of civilization. The Egyptian nation, the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman; empires of colossal magnitude in days gone by, they command the special attention of mankind. Illustrious they were in the plenitude of their power; and if specially distinguished by military prowess, which, after all, has the elements of the cruel and disastrous in it, yet they were also distinguished by much that was intellectual and noble—proclaiming the original dignity of man, and exhibiting human nature in a continual struggle of upward ascent, from degradation to dignity.

There was indeed a gradual deterioration in a certain way from the head of gold in the days of the culmination of Babylonian greatness and splendour, to inferior kingdoms, represented by the baser metals; yet in another way it was an advance from that which was less strong and durable to that which was more strong and durable; and though, after serving their ends in the great purpose of God, they were all broken up into fragmentary ruin, yet out of those fragments and out of that ruin, there rose again—and this is particularly applicable to the disruption of the Roman empire—elements of progress, which have advanced to a still higher degree of perfection, just as often in large cities vast blocks of buildings, and they of no mean character, are removed for the erection of others of still more imposing appearance; or, as in a wide demesne, many trees in themselves beautiful, and many other objects of great interest, and perhaps utility, are swept away for the general improvement of the whole, both as regards what is beautiful and what is useful;

so the decline and fall of the Roman empire has resulted in the establishment of a better and more perfect and beneficent order of things. It has resulted in the formation of other subordinate kingdoms, which, though no one of them in point of magnitude, power, and prowess, could compare with the original fabric, yet in their combined action as a whole, and their relative action upon one another, have tended to a still more decided manifestation of advanced civilization. And the present age certainly affords abundant evidence of the development of all that is useful, profitable, intellectual, and noble—all that is calculated to raise man into a more dignified position, and to promote in every way his happiness and comfort. Abounding evil there is, no doubt, moral and physical—vice that it is fearful to contemplate, or to read the record of—misery that shocks the sensitive mind, and makes the heart tremble and weep. The French Revolution was an unfolding of human depravity in the very centre of boasted civilization, such as can be appreciated only feebly in its malignity; and many such things there are, repeated more or less severely and offensively, both in the French and other nations. But notwithstanding all this, the general progress appears to be unto good, giving hope, that in the lapse of time improvement may be of a more marked character, drawing nearer and nearer to perfection.

But all this reaches only to that which is probable, at the utmost to that which is very highly probable, but it does not bear the impress of the certain; and the calculations of thoughtful men are often at fault in reference to advances towards perfection. How con-

fidently, for instance, it was anticipated by some at the time of the first International Exhibition, in the year 1851, that the era of war had passed by, and that there was then inaugurated a period of profound peace, in which the nations would vie with one another, not as regards the battle of the warriors, but the beautiful exhibitions of skilled industry in the beneficent arts of life. The lapse of three or four years falsified all these prophetic anticipations, painfully so. The nations were dashed against one another in fierce and sanguinary conflict, and unmistakable evidence was afforded, that with all the advance of science, and all the kindly interchange of national brotherhood in a bright season of promise, the perfection of mankind was far from being reached.

And no matter how advanced the progress may be in that which is good and useful, in all that is calculated to advance the happiness, comfort, and interest of man—as, for instance, the development of the electric telegraph, for the quick transmission of communication, both public and private, and the practical application of the properties of steam for easy travelling by land and water, and the ready transit of the various productions of the earth—notwithstanding all the wonderful achievements of the hand and intellect of man, securing to millions comforts, conveniences, luxuries, and elegancies our fathers never knew, yet from all this there might be a terrible collapse into disorder, anarchy, discomfort, and utter ruin. For as the body of man, nursing the seeds of a fatal malady, may nevertheless, in the power of an iron constitution, exhibit not only a marvellous tenacity of life, but also astonishing

manifestations of activity and vigour, both physically and intellectually, and yet in the long run succumb to the fatal malady which, for a very protracted period resisted in its advances, has at last asserted its all-conquering power ; so human nature, endowed originally with marvellous power of life in mind and body, may long contend, both in its individual and national aspect, against the working of the primeval disease, and exhibit a vivacity and energy, giving promise of ultimate restoration to the perfect state of health, and yet at last fail in the prolonged struggle, and in the end fall a victim to the first deadly mischief.

Such a sad issue and catastrophe seemed all but verified in the days of the deluge, when the inhabitants of the earth, having corrupted themselves, and ran headlong forward in a career of vicious indulgence and outrageous violence, notwithstanding their advanced civilization, and perhaps as the very result of it, perished by the indignant judgment of God.

For touching the civilization of that period, have we any reason to doubt it ? On the contrary, have we not very strong reason for believing that it was developed to a most remarkable extent ? Though very scanty records of that era have reached us in the shape of history, the whole being comprehended in five chapters of the Bible, yet enough is recorded to warrant a cogent inference as to the developed civilization of the then world. In a very early period of the history, we read of one who was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ, and of another who was an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron, showing plainly that knowledge and skill in the arts and

sciences were being very early exhibited. For if there were musicians and artisans in those days, it is no stretch of the imagination to believe that there were also architects and painters and poets. Doubtless, in those days, as well as in the days of the prosperity of Sodom and Gomorrah, "they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded." There was progress in agriculture, in commerce, in all the arts of life. Did they build cities, great and splendid and magnificent? Did they clothe themselves in gorgeous and costly array? Had they men-servants and maid-servants, and singing-men and singing-women? Did they multiply around them the elegancies and luxuries and pomp and splendour of refined and civilized life? Why should we doubt it? Why should we hesitate to believe that there was a marvellous advance in all that appertains to civilization in a period of nearly two thousand years? How rapid the progress in civilization in Israel in the brief space of less than eighty years! for, whereas in the beginning of the reign of Saul they were brought so low, that there was not a smith in all the land of Israel, in the days of David there was a flowing abundance of wealth and prosperity, and still more advanced was it in the days of Solomon. And our own country has, in the space of less than two hundred years, made such marked progress in all that concerns the material prosperity of the nation, that it is marvellous to compare the present with the proximate past. What then must have been the degree of progress in the antediluvian world, in the extended period of over fifteen hundred years.

And all the more rapid and extraordinary it must



have been, when we recollect that the earliest history of man began, not with the rudimental, uneducated life of the savage, but with the most highly-developed intellectual life which belongs to most advanced civilization. Was not our father, Adam, endowed with the highest order of intellect? How great that intellect!—wonderful, comprehensive, high-soaring, deep-searching, far-seeing! Gifted, also, he was by the Creator with marvellous knowledge. The knowledge which comes to the generations of mankind by diligent study, repeated experiment, and constant observation was, at all events to a very large extent, directly imparted to him in the day that he was formed in the image of his Maker. This is no fanciful supposition. It is recorded in Scripture that Adam gave names to all animated creatures—yea, the Lord God brought them to him that he might name them. And the names which he gave them were not mere capricious designations, but they were expressive of the nature, habits, and qualities of the animals. Adam, therefore, must have had an extended knowledge of animated nature. Was he, then, ignorant of the vegetable kingdom? less gifted in this respect than his wise son Solomon? It were hard to say of what Adam was ignorant in the wide range of knowledge. It is not, indeed, necessary to assign to him a perfect understanding of all the minuter details of knowledge in matter and mind which have been developed through the successive ages of the world, according to the appointment of God and the established laws of nature; but that all the great leading principles of knowledge in all departments of science were lodged in him, is a scarcely questionable truth, bearing in mind not only, what has just

been referred to, his knowledge of animated nature, independently of all antecedent experience, but also the unblemished perfection in which he was originally created. Doubtless, in him originally, as the parent of all, was deposited at least the germ of every conceivable development and manifestation of the human intellect. How competent, then, was that great and wonderful man, notwithstanding the deterioration caused by the lapse from original righteousness, to direct the energies, activities, and operations in mind and body of his posterity; and the Scripture tells that he lived nine hundred and thirty years, so that, through that prolonged period, the energies of his mighty intellect were available for the benefit of mankind. Then, beside this, there is a long list of illustrious patriarchs, whose lives on earth were marvellously prolonged; and though there is nothing said of their intellectual ability, but only of the devoted piety of some, yet we may reasonably believe that they did not fall very greatly below the mental calibre of their first father. With intellects such as these to direct human affairs, it were impossible not to believe that the antediluvian period was one of great progress. If a succession of great statesmen in a nation invariably tends to elevate that nation in the social scale, why should not the same principle apply to the days before the flood? But indeed, the Scripture makes a very distinct reference to a godlike race existing in the earth in those days.

All this would intimate an upward tendency in one way, and as far as we could draw an inference from it, significantly intimate the probability of ultimate restoration. But, alas! in another way, there was a grievous

retrogression and deterioration—traceable, perhaps, to that which worked such mighty mischief in Sodom, “pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness,” temporal prosperity, producing, instead of thankfulness to the Giver of all good, an utter forgetfulness of Him, and estrangement from His service in the deceitful working of unrighteousness; though when the defection assumed a marked and fatal character we are not distinctly informed, only we know it went on, increasing more and more, in spite of all intellectual, scientific, and mechanical improvement, till “the earth was filled with violence, and all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.” Then utter and absolute ruin appeared imminent. The heavens were black with terrible signs of judgment, and the sound of the rushing of the mighty waters from beneath fell ominously on the ears of the inhabitants of the then world, proclaiming inevitable destruction. And destruction there had been to the uttermost, of the race of man but for the intervention of divine grace. There was a germ of righteousness still left in the family of man. The Patriarch Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He and his family alone were saved from the overflowing scourge—eight persons; and all the rest, without exception, perished.

But though there was not then utter and irreparable destruction, because mercy rejoiced against judgment, yet still the solemn history shows manifestly that no advance of civilization carries with it the certainty of ultimate restoration, as long as the elements of moral evil exist in the world, for they may assume, at any moment, the character of an overflowing scourge, breaking down every barrier of civilization, and inundating the world to utter ruin.

By the revelation of God in His Word, and by that only, we can arrive at a conclusion absolutely certain, concerning the matter of restoration ; even as by that, and that only, we learn as a definite certainty that things are not now as God originally created them.

Neither a general apprehension of the character of God would be sufficient to assure our minds infallibly, nor any advance of civilization which has been in times past, and more abundantly in these present times : indeed, with regard to such present civilization, it is hard, if not impossible, to look at it apart from the elements of Christianity, for by that it is immensely influenced ; but that element of Christianity involves in it a revelation of God, and it is that revelation, like a light from heaven shining brightly, which makes manifest with certainty and distinctness this great futurity of God.

Thus the Apostle Peter, in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost, speaks of the restitution of all things, and speaks of it as a futurity which God had declared by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began, though, probably, it was only dimly signified in the beginning, and more fully unfolded as time rolled on, till the Holy Ghost guided the Apostle to declare it with a defined distinctness as standing in connection with the second advent of the Son of God.

And thus we know from the certain word of the inspired Scripture, that there is a bright and blessed future appointed for this disturbed, disordered, and suffering creation, which will gloriously illustrate the saying that is written, " Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."



### CHAPTER III.

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Restoration : Nature and Extent of it—Incorrect Opinions of some on the Subject—What the Scripture teaches—The Doctrine of the Eternity of Punishment considered.

**W**HEN we speak, or rather when the Scripture speaks, of the restoration of all things as the holy and blessed purpose of Him who, in the beginning, created all things fair and beautiful, it is not by such a declaration of restoration intended that every member of the human family shall, without exception, be restored. On the contrary, it gives solemn intimation that millions shall perish in their transgression and apostacy from God, and perish irrevocably, cut off from the favour of God and His benignant blessing.

There have been, indeed, and there are those who believe and assert, that ultimately the restoration will be thorough, complete, and universal, in the fullest sense conceivable. Though it may be after the lapse of mighty ages, though it may be after ages of intense suffering and most bitter sorrow, though it may be after the transgressors have most keenly felt what an evil thing and bitter it is to have sinned against God and to have violated His holy Commandments, yet that ultimately all the fallen creatures of God shall be re-

stored, and stand before Him in renovated beauty and perfect holiness and the fulness of joy. And they ground their faith in this matter on the infinite benignity of God, who, as the kind and loving Father of all His intelligent creatures, will never, as they think, suffer those whom His power and love have called into existence, to perish with an everlasting destruction.

Such an opinion or theory has a plausible and winning aspect, because suffering has always a repulsive character to the human mind, and joy and gladness always command the approbation of the heart: and certainly if such an issue could be proved, that is, if it could be established upon evidence of an unquestionable character, it would clear away some at least of very perplexing difficulties in the moral government of God, more so, probably, than any theory which might be suggested. For we can conceive that God might, consistently with His ever-glorious love, permit the fall of innocent creatures into sin, and as the result of that, prolonged suffering, and of a very bitter and intense nature, extending even through long periods of duration, to teach His moral creatures by a most solemn demonstration never to be forgotten, the hatefulness and inveterate evil of sin; and so, by a discipline most painfully severe, to raise the fallen, that ultimately being restored, they might never again consent to and do the evil thing which had brought upon them such protracted and unspeakable suffering; and then the light of His love might shine forth with unclouded splendour through the universal range of creation, and every voice of wailing and woe for ever hushed, songs of everlasting praise might ascend before Him, because of unmixed goodness, infinite love, and perfect joy.

utterly degraded condition, the almighty power of God could consistently, with some laws not revealed to us, breathe into the soul of such an one a spirit of good, and give it such energy of operation, that like leaven, it might leaven the whole lump, so that that which was evil should thereby become good. However, this is a matter of undeniable certainty, that the Scripture reveals no such thing as the universal restoration of every fallen creature : on the contrary, while it most certainly declares the love of God, again and again with oft-repeated emphasis, and points to His providential care of all His creatures, and the unfailing supply of all their wants, and the marvellous redemption which He has provided for His people, as unmistakable evidences of the same, it no less certainly declares, and repeats it with all solemnity again and again, however men may find it difficult to reconcile it with the love and paternity of God, that multitudes perish everlastingly, or in other words, that their existence is continued through endless ages in a state of punitive suffering.

But here again, as there are many who hold an universal restoration, even of such as have sinned most presumptuously, blasphemously, persistently against the remonstrance of God, against His solemn warnings, against the entreaties of His love, so also there are many who deny the eternity of punishment, not promoting, like the former, a doctrine of universal restoration, but maintaining the cessation of punishment, after a limited period, by the annihilation of the victim.

This is a growing class, not confined to such as are infidels, or freethinkers, as they are called, who deny altogether what Christians believe to be the revelation

of God, but they are found amongst those who profess to venerate the Bible, and receive with implicit faith all its holy teachings—among those who receive evangelical religion in what they believe to be its truth and purity.

And yet, when we look into the pages of the holy volume of inspiration, how clear and distinct and repeated the statements appear to be concerning the endless duration of woe, concerning the misery of those who are separated for ever from the favour of the Most High ! How solemn and full of terrible meaning the word written in the Prophecies of Isaiah : “ Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire ; who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings ? ” Was there no apprehension or no intimation of interminable suffering in these most thrilling questions ? And then the Prophet Daniel, looking through the long vista of the future ages on to the day of final resurrection, has written in the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, “ Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Is not the everlasting contempt a thing as certain as the everlasting life ? If not, why not ? How can we limit the one and not the other ? And the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness who never deceives, never needlessly awakens alarm in the human breast—oh, how terribly-startling and impressive they are !—He has said, “ Their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.” Once, twice, three times He said it. And who that has read with any degree of thoughtful attention the Holy Scriptures of God, does not remember



that most solemn and awful passage which occurs in the Book of the Apocalypse, where it is written, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image;" and another passage in that remarkable Book declares, "The devil, that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever." What can be stronger than this?

How can these passages, and many such like, gathering strength from their very accumulation, how can they be set aside? and yet the attempt is made to explain them away by criticism and subtle reasoning. But may we not suspect that the great deceiver himself has to do with this very thing? If he said to the woman of old, in contravention to the Word of God, "Ye shall not surely die," need we wonder if now, in continued propagation of the primeval lie, he says, Ye shall not surely suffer eternally; and what if he make use of the subtlety of intellect to give colour and plausibility to the lie? Can these strong testimonies of the Bible be nullified by the power of human intellect, exercised in mischievous ingenuity? And what great truth of Holy Scripture cannot be explained away by the same mischievous ingenuity of a highly intelligent and clever mind—miracles and doctrines and the holy commandments of God? But shall we set aside the plain and oft-repeated testimonies of the Word of God, both in the Old Testament and in the New, uttered by prophets and apostles and the Lord Himself, by those who never deceived, who could not deceive, and hang

our faith upon the subtle exposition of an ingenious mind, or the uncertainty of a mere Greek criticism ?

If there be no such thing in the Bible as the doctrine of endless suffering to the impenitent workers of iniquity, to the enemies of the holiness of God, why have such and such passages been written, which must leave the impression on every calm unprejudiced reader of the Bible, that this is the solemn and awful doctrine of Holy Scripture ? Can we believe that the Bible, designed for the instruction of mankind in things pertaining to life and death, is written in such dark and uncertain phraseology that it means the very opposite of what it seems to mean, and that the meaning of it, in things of most solemn moment, can only be discovered by a refined subtlety and an hyperbole of criticism ?

The fact is, these opponents of the doctrine of eternity of punishment, instead of coming to the Scripture with humility of mind to inquire what saith the Word of God, first settle in their own minds, from considerations independent of revelation, that such a doctrine is not the doctrine of God, and then they labour earnestly to explain away the numerous passages which stand out in solemn antagonism to their adopted theory.

But even apart from Holy Scripture and the testimonies thereof, no sufficient reason can be assigned for impugning the doctrine. Does anyone dwell on the love of God ? Doubtless, we cannot unduly magnify that love. It passes our largest, our loftiest conceptions. It is vast, infinite, interminable, incomprehensible. And millions glorify Him, and shall for ever glorify Him, for the manifestation of His love in its

illimitable expansiveness. Yet we know, as a solemn matter of fact unquestionable, that it is quite consistent with the existence of that incomprehensible love, that there should be suffering, both in body and mind, often intensely severe, and protracted through a series of years, even as regards this present life. What multitudes are weeping and mourning, most bitterly afflicted, "grievously tormented" in body and soul; in many instances, perhaps, the fruit of their own folly and sin, but that only aggravates the anguish! One word of the God of love, one word of His love invested with the omnipotent energy of His Spirit, and all the sorrow and anguish would cease in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; all would be peace, and joy, and rapture of praise, and thanksgiving. It is not so, however, and yet He is the God of love—the God of love. Love in the majesty of irresistible power; and still He permits the suffering to go on, even to the end of life. Well it is possible, as far as human judgment is concerned, and looking at the matter entirely apart from revelation, that all the suffering may be ended in death, and the existence of man be then for ever concluded.

But if man live in a future state, which the most enlightened of the heathen have believed, reasoning from the probabilities of the case, and if suffering should reappear in a new, and what we may reasonably believe to be a permanent order of things—if it should re-appear as the result of that which has been done in this life, then who shall set a limit to it, either as regards the nature or duration of it? Who shall say when it will come to an end, if ever? If it may be for a hundred years, why may it not be for a thousand; or

if for a thousand, why not for ten thousand; if for ten thousand, why not for a million; if for a million, why not for a million of millions? There is no more reason for limiting it to the shorter period, than extending it to the longer—no more reason for limiting it definitely, than expanding it indefinitely, even to eternity. And what if the spirit of enmity to God exist for ever in the hearts of those who are condemned, manifesting itself continually in thoughts, if not acts of rebellion, it must needs provoke evermore the wrath of God, and so involve a perpetuity of punishment.

It is in vain to oppose to all this the infinite benignity of God; for if the sorrows and troubles of this present life, often severe and protracted beyond expression, the cry of painful agony, the tear that tells of the heart's deep woe, cannot divert the Almighty from His purpose sternly severe, why should the prolonged suffering of ages do it?

Nor is this at all in contradiction of what has been said touching the possibility of God permitting the existence of very prolonged suffering through multiplied ages unto final restoration; for if that is conceivable on the one hand as consistent with the love of God, so on the other hand is the perpetuity of suffering conceivable as consistent with the same love; for what if God is pleased in His infinite wisdom to make use of that suffering, which is not a direct act of His own creation, but the result of the perverse and rebellious obstinacy of certain of His creatures, for the stability and confirmation in holiness of other of His creatures, both such as have never fallen, and such as hearkened to the overture of mercy, and turned to God in an

acceptable time, shall not His love be glorified in this ?

But the truth is, that while the whole subject is full of the most profound solemnity, we can know nothing certainly concerning it except what the inspired Word of God teaches. And if that Word does teach an eternity of punishment to the workers of iniquity, we must believe it, and only conclude that there is an unalterable necessity for it, though what that necessity is may lie deep in the abyss of undeveloped things, even as the origin of evil.

There is no human being having the tender and compassionate feelings belonging to our nature, who would not rejoice, and rejoice exceedingly, in the thought, that ultimately a time would come when all suffering should cease in God's creation, utterly and for ever, and the fires of hell be extinguished by the influx of the mighty, and deeply-flowing, and widely-spreading river of the love of God, and nought but the voice of joy be heard through endless ages of rapture ; if only it be consistent with the glory of God and the majesty of His moral government ; but for such a state of things we search in vain in the inspired Word of God. There is no revelation of it.

But though the Bible declares that the ungodly shall perish in their disobedience, and because of it, that a strange punishment is appointed to the impenitent workers of iniquity, and that there is a woe that endureth evermore, it nevertheless unfolds, as a most blessed and consoling truth, to those who love God, and sigh and cry for the abominations done in the earth ; that all things connected with this present world shall be so re-

stored, that the earth, with the inhabitants thereof, shall be perfect, as in the day when God created man in His own image, and gave "him dominion over the works of His hands, and put all things under his feet—" all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas;" yea, that the goodness and power and glory of God shall be exhibited more fully and wonderfully to the praise of the Creator through grace, than when in the beginning God looked upon everything that He had made, and behold! it was very good.

In that day the Scripture shall be verified; one Scripture that says, "sinners shall be consumed out of the earth," and another that declares, "the righteous shall flourish like a palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon"; and another that testifies, "the creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God;" and another that proclaims the returning power of truth and love and virtue, in the record, that "righteousness shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea;" and every Scripture that opens up the glorious future, to show the blessedness and beauty and praise and joy that God has prepared for the renovated earth. Every word of Scripture touching the grand prophetic future shall be verified illustriously.

In that day the anthem of creation shall be sung with brilliant variations and superb embellishments: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Yea, all the songs of praises written in the Book of Revelation shall

be sung with an emphasis of meaning which can be but imperfectly apprehended now.

In the very hour that the enemy accomplished his tremendous mischief, when he entered the hallowed garden of Eden, and corrupted man, and spoiled the bloom of his most beautiful innocence; in the very hour that he sowed the noxious seed of deadly power, which was to yield a harvest of woe unspeakable, and multiply itself with a fatal fertility from age to age; in that very hour God gave an intimation, the earliest intimation, of ultimate restoration, when He said to the false one, the wicked destroyer of the handywork of the Creator, "The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head." That word was itself a seed of blessed promise—promise of victory, promise of the deliverance of him who had become a lawful captive, promise of restoration. It was a seed of indestructible vitality, which has germinated and increased more and more, through consecutive generations, though the fulness of all that is involved in it is not yet made manifest.

And now, gathering certainly from the inspired record of Eternal Truth, that it is the good and holy purpose of Almighty God to restore all things, we need not doubt that the advance of civilization, to which reference has been made, and the development of arts and sciences, and all the discoveries of modern times, and the application to practical uses of great principles, known from the beginning, but only in latter times beneficially connected with the interests of communities, as the railway system of locomotion, and the marvellous adaptation of the electric telegraph for the instantaneous transmis-

sion of intelligence, even through the depths of the vast ocean, bringing the distant parts of the earth into practical propinquity to one another, and everything tending to ameliorate the condition of mankind, both in mind and body, we need not doubt that they are all connected, more or less, with the great purpose of the Almighty, touching the final restoration. And although these things, now so wonderful in our estimation, and deservedly so, may appear in comparison of the momentous future that is yet before the earth and its inhabitants, as the minor things of childhood, in comparison of the more momentous things of the full-grown man; yet, as the very toys and occupations of childhood exercise a decided influence upon the graver pursuits and the occupations of the full-grown man, developing the powers of the body, and affecting the character of the mind, so the very discoveries of science and the application of great principles to the practical uses of life, may have a most important bearing upon the future developments which are yet before the world. Yea, and it is very highly probable, that the existence of all the evil that is in the world, both moral and natural, may have a connection, and a most important one, with the great process of restoration, though we may not be able to explain all the detail of its action in the matter.

With regard to individuals, such as love God, and are partakers of the covenant of grace which is in Christ Jesus the Lord, we know unquestionably, that their sorrows and afflictions, trials and temptations, pain and sickness, and all their several crosses, work together for their good; for so it is written in the sure record of the Word of the Lord: "We know that all things work



together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose ;" yea, and their very stumbles in the paths of virtue are not unfrequently overruled for their greater stability in the faith. David might never have known the deep corruption of his heart, and his utter weakness in the hour of temptation, nor the immense evil of sin, nor the measureless mercy of God—never, but for the grievous act of transgression into which he was permitted to fall : howbeit, the knowledge and perception of these truths tended, no doubt, in the sanctifying power of the Spirit of God, to his confirmation in the faith, leading him to greater watchfulness, to more earnest prayer, and to an entire reliance on the mighty power and sustaining grace of God.

But if it be true with regard to individuals, that all things—things in their nature desirable, and therefore good, and things in their nature undesirable, and therefore evil—have a co-operative influence for ultimate good to those whose characters God is reforming, that they may shine in the beauty of holiness in His everlasting kingdom, there is no reason why the same may not hold true as regards the grand restoration of all things.

Is it not a certainty in reference to physical things, that the very refuse of the earth, things most offensive to the natural senses, and which, if left in their normal corruption, would generate the most dangerous miasma, and induce a destructive pestilence, nevertheless, properly employed and utilized, tend to the enriching and fertilization of the earth, and so to the production of the most lovely, healthy, and luxuriant growths in the vegetable world, in esculents, and trees, and shrubs, and flowers, so that out of the poisonous cometh wholesome food, and

out of the offensive that which is pleasant and agreeable? Why then may it not be so in the moral world? The abounding evil that is in it may be the very means, in the mighty and wonderful process of moral purification, in bringing forth into a marvellous perfection of beauty the trees of the Lord's planting, the souls whom He is nourishing with His grace unto the fruition of His glory. And thus it may come to pass, to the infinite confusion of the great Enemy, that the evil which he has done in the earth, and laboured incessantly to multiply, corrupting by every means in his power the beautiful work of God, will tend to the greater manifestation of goodness and glory, not only the goodness and glory of God the Creator, but also that of man the creature; the latter, however, resulting from the former, essentially and necessarily connected with it. Satan meant it all for evil, rejoiced in it because it was evil, gloated over it in his fierce hatred to God and man; but God overruled it all for good, and the Scripture is fulfilled in terrible emphasis, even the Scripture which says, "He travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made: his mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate."





## CHAPTER IV.

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Restoration : The prominent position of the Atonement in connection with it—The necessity of Atonement—Its universal character—Retrospective as well as prospective—Why so long delayed.

**I**N the foreground of restoration stands the hallowed, mysterious, solemnly impressive work of atonement, at once the evidence of the evil of sin before God, and of the love of God to the guilty, to save him from the terrible consequences of transgression.

Atonement is properly the reconciliation of the guilty with God through the office and act of one who is not guilty, and stands as mediator between the two parties—him who is offended, and him who has given the offence. Popularly speaking, atonement is taken to signify the work or act by which reconciliation is effected.

Without atonement, taken in this sense or meaning of it, there can be no restoration of any fallen creature or of the world at large to the favour of God, and the enjoyment of Him. Consistently with the principles of eternal justice, and the solemn sanctions of the holy law, sin cannot be forgiven unless an atonement be made, that is, unless an act be done, which, while it satisfies the requirements of divine justice, gives free

scope for the blessed manifestation of mercy to the lost : in other words, in order that God may be just and glorified in His justice, and yet be the justifier of him who has sinned, remitting the solemn penalty of the transgression, an atonement must be made.

Does any one ask why ? Does any one say in his simplicity, Cannot God, if it so please Him, remit the penalty of the sin without atonement ? Is He not a sovereign, the sovereign ruler of all things in heaven and earth, who can order all things according to the good pleasure of His will, and needeth not to render an account of any of His ways to any of His creatures ? Yes ; but though a sovereign, yet His sovereignty is not exercised capriciously, but in holy consistency with all other His glorious attributes. He cannot, even in the uncontrollable exercise of His sovereignty, do any thing at variance with His holiness, His faithfulness, His justice, His wisdom. He cannot deny Himself. He cannot deny the holiness and perfection of that law which He has given to man.

That law requires exact obedience. " One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." The smallest violation of the law is sin, and puts the transgressor in an altered position before God. But if the disobedience of the law be passed over unpunished, then the law was needlessly exact in its demands. It was not perfect. It was neither wise, nor just, nor good : and if it may be violated with impunity, that is, if God in His irresponsible sovereignty remit the penalty, then has the difference ceased between right and wrong ; to transgress the law and to obey the law is all as one.

To forgive sin, therefore, is not the act of a sovereign acting capriciously, but the solemn act of a wise and holy one, who has made arrangements that while He manifests mercy to the guilty, no dishonour may be attached to His justice, and no intelligent creature may ever have reason to say, It is but a light thing to sin against God.

But who shall offer an atonement to God—to God the Judge of all—to God, of whom it is said, He will render to every man according to his deeds, in the exercise of that righteous judgment which cannot be called in question? Who shall offer an atonement to God? What man? What angel? What creature in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath? “If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him:” so says the Scripture, that is, the matter shall be settled before an earthly tribunal; “but if a man sin against God, who shall entreat for him?” Who shall plead his cause, so as to be able to say to God, Thou mayest forgive, and yet glorify Thy great name; Thou mayest forgive, and yet maintain inviolate the principles of eternal justice? Who shall be the advocate of the guilty before the just God—the God of the spirits of all flesh? He, only He, who has offered an atonement, made satisfaction for the guilt, while He seeks the remission of the penalty—the terrible penalty. But who has done this? Who has made this atonement? The Son of God has done it; God manifest in the flesh; God in human nature.

The Scripture declares the solemn, awful, momentous, ever-memorable truth—again and again emphatically it declares it—“Christ has died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.”

From this great and solemn fact, standing out with such distinctive pre-eminence in the Scripture of truth, we may gather, certainly, that the atonement must be made in the nature that sinned. Angelic nature cannot atone for the transgression of human nature. A man must do it—one who is really, truly, essentially a man, and yet not a mere man. The work is too great for such an one, even in the unspotted perfection of human nature. Only God Himself can accomplish it in the actual assumption of man's nature. And it cannot be done by one born in sin, in the heritable transmission of guilt from generation to generation. That would utterly disqualify. Such an one born subject to the law would fall under the condemnation of it in his own person, and could not therefore make atonement for the sins of others. But the Son of God had no sin; born out of the ordinary course of human generation, the entail of original sin is cut off in him. He is holy from the womb. He is Jesus Christ the righteous. He only can make atonement. He has made atonement. How? By His obedience unto death, obeying the law perfectly, yet dying under the penalty of the law for others, bearing in His own person the sins of many, suffering in body and soul the punishment due for their sins. Great was His sorrow; most bitter His suffering; painful, distressing, and ignominious His death. He was the Son of God, yet He died for sin.

But what shall we say to these things? Does God take delight in the suffering and death of His Son? Nay, verily. Not as the enemy has malignant pleasure in the accumulation of sorrow and suffering unspeakable, and the more it aboundeth it pleaseth him the more. It

is not so with God. It cannot be so with Him whose name is Love ; Whose paternal loving-kindness blessed man with joy unspeakable until sin entered and provoked His displeasure. Even now, though He hates iniquity, and His everlasting frown is upon sin, yet He taketh not delight in the death of a sinner : much more, He taketh not pleasure in the death of Him of whom He testified once and again—" This is my beloved Son ;" but He is well pleased with that zeal for His glory, and that love for His people, which went forth with irrepressible determination of purpose, in spite of sorrow, shame, suffering, and death. The Lord is well pleased with His righteousness—strong unto death ; and for the sake of that righteousness, from which He would not swerve through the fear of death, with all its darkest and most terrible accompaniments, God will remit the sins of many ; and He is glorified because Jesus has died, the just for the unjust. " Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Precious above all is the death of Him who is the King of saints, who has redeemed the sons of men to be the sons of God, by the shedding of His own blood, by the surrender of His own life.

There is ample corroboration of all this in what is written by the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he says in the word of the Lord, and speaking in the name of the Messiah : " Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." Commenting on this, the inspired writer adds, " Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings

and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein ; which are offered by the law ; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

From all this it is quite manifest, that not in the suffering and death of the Victim God takes delight, but in the accomplishment of His will, carried out in the spirit of holy loving obedience. But if the manifestation of that obedience can only be set forth by the enduring of sorrow and suffering unspeakable, the very enduring of that sorrow and suffering makes the obedience all the more wonderful and meritorious. Nevertheless, we may certainly infer, from what is recorded in the Scripture, that the death of Christ was indispensably necessary, not only as an evidence of His most distinguished obedience, but also as an act which was in itself required to make perfect the atonement. For, if it were otherwise, if only the manifestation of obedience was necessary, God could have interposed to save Him at the last extremity, even after He had been nailed to the cross : He could have caused Him to descend from the cross, and have said, as in the case of Abraham, Now I know that thou fearest and lovest me, seeing thou art willing to surrender thy life, thy precious life, for my name's sake ; He could at once have confounded His enemies, and have glorified, before men and angels, His approbation of the obedience of His well-beloved Son. But it was not so. He did not interpose to avert the death of the holy Victim. It is a recorded fact of history that Christ died, and regarding



that fact in connection with the moral government of God, we conclude certainly, that it was necessary that He should die. But why? What is death? It is the penalty of the original transgression, and it is visited upon all of woman born for Adam's sake. But Christ had no sin. Not only He did no sin, but He was born in immaculate purity. There was no taint of original sin in Him—yet He died. But wherefore? Why should He bear the penalty of sin who did no sin? The Scripture teaches us, that it was because the sin of the world was imputed to Him. Innocent, He nevertheless bore the punishment of sin, that it might be taken away from others, even from those who believe in His name, and of whom it is said, they are redeemed by His blood. His death, the surrender of His life, is the act that maketh atonement. He dies, that man may live: He suffers, that man may be delivered from suffering, in the time and the season appointed of the Father.

Now though there is a strong analogy or parallel between the divine law and the human, the latter being the image of the former, yet there is nothing like atonement in our criminal jurisprudence; that is, in the transference of guilt from one to another, though in our civil jurisprudence, there is a faint shadow of it; for one man may discharge the debt which has been contracted by another, and then the debtor goes free; and accordingly, in Scripture our sins are likened to debts, and God is said frankly to forgive those who have nothing to pay. But if a man be a murderer, that is, criminally guilty and liable to death, because of his offence, no man, however he may be moved to it by

love, may become a substitute for him, and die in his stead, giving the murderer immunity from the penalty of a violated law.

Probably it is intended by God that the work of atonement should stand out in the majesty of transcendental dignity, and find no parallel or counterpart in any human law, or code of laws. But there are those, and such as profess to receive the revelation of God as contained in Holy Scripture, who object, nevertheless, to what is technically called the doctrine of substitution, denying that the sin of the world has been imputed to or laid upon Christ, and they invent to themselves some other explanation of the great work of atonement; and yet what is it, but another illustration to be added to thousands already existing of intellect seeking to be wise above what is written. To deny that Christ is our substitute, and that the sins of the many have been laid upon Him, and that He has been treated as the guilty, though really and personally innocent, being "holy, harmless, and undefiled," is simply to nullify and set at nought some of the clearest and strongest testimonies of the Bible, repeated again and again in the varied forms of type and prophecy and distinct doctrinal statement; repeated again and again, both in the Old Testament and the New. Does anyone object and say that it is altogether beyond the credible, that the sin of one man should be transferred by imputation to another, that is, to the extent of the latter bearing the punishment due to the former? But can the objection stand for a moment against the irresistible facts of experience and observation? Who has not observed?—who is there that knows not in the range of his experience, that in

ordinary every-day life men are continually suffering from the follies, sins, and indiscretions of others, in "mind, body, and estate;" and on the other hand, that benefits, often very great benefits, accrue to many, from the wisdom and virtue and discretion and righteousness of their fellows? How then can it be regarded as beyond the limits of the credible, that though all we, like sheep, have gone astray, yet that the Lord should have laid upon Him (*i.e.* Christ) the iniquities of us all—treated Him as the guilty, that we might be dealt with as righteous in Him?

But it may be said, in the way of objection—If Christ be our substitute, bearing in His body the penalty due for sin, why then do we also suffer punishment? If Christ died for us, why then do we all die? Now, first of all, we know, as a matter of certainty, that all do not die. In the Old Testament Scripture there are two memorable examples of those who never tasted death. And the New Testament precisely declares that those Christians who shall be alive when Christ re-appears in the last day, shall be exempt from death. And wherefore? Why are these, even regarding them as exceptional cases, why are they exempted from the judicial sentence pronounced against our first father? Is it not because Christ died? the death due to them fell upon Him, and they are delivered from death. Here is substitution most literally exemplified. But secondly, with regard to the rest, though they are not delivered from the power of death in this way, yet they are in another way, even by a glorious and triumphant resurrection. And so the Apostle says, contrasting the immense benefits of the death of Christ with the sad

result of Adam's disobedience, "If by one man's offence, death reigned by one, much more, they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Delivered from death by resurrection, they shall reign in life.

No doubt release, and immediate release, from penalty may be involved in the abstract idea of substitution, and probably such would be the result of the death of Christ to those who believe in Him, if the only end intended were the justification of the transgressor from the penal consequences of the violation of the law. But it is not so. Renovation of moral character is contemplated, as well as deliverance from the curse. Small, indeed, speaking comparatively, were the benefit of deliverance from suffering, if man were left in the offensive deformity of his corrupted nature. This must needs be corrected, and the disciplinary process involved in this, with all its contingents of suffering, and suffering unto death, is the reason, or at least one reason, why the benefits of Christ's death are not realized and accumulated upon us at once.

God, while accepting the sacrifice of Christ, offered on behalf of the guilty, has reserved to Himself the right of conferring the benefits as He pleases, and when He pleases; and if the beneficial results in the gloriousness of their consummation are delayed for a season, it is in the exercise of wisdom and goodness, and for the greater profit of His people; but in due time they shall be realized, and at full value, to the endless joy of the redeemed.

Now the atonement having been made by the Son of God, through condescending love and most deep humilia-

tion and lowly obedience unto death, no one can object to the pardon of the guilty—no, not the holiest, as if it disturbed the equity of the Divine moral government. No angel, no archangel, who has kept his first estate, and maintained his purity unsullied, can now say, What profit has it been to me that I stood fast in the commandments of God; that I resisted temptation in the day of my earliest probation; what profit to me more than to the sinner? for behold, God has pardoned the vilest, exalted them, lifted them up into His favour, and crowned them with glory and immortality.

Has He done so in the manifestation of mercy most wonderful? but how has He done it? Has it not been through the discipline of suffering most severe, not only suffering, in which all have participated who have sinned, but also the suffering unparalleled of One who never sinned? Has God indeed forgiven the guilty? But in order to this, did not the Son of God descend from the bosom of the Father—from the centre of light and love and glory? Did He not assume the nature that had sinned, though without the sin adventitiously appertaining to it? Was He not tempted in that nature? Did He not weep and suffer, and bleed and die? Is sin then a light thing? Is it not an evil thing? Is it not a thing of unspeakable evil? If God has forgiven sin, has He not done it so, that all creation must tremble, though millions rejoice? has He not done it so, as to say to every moral intelligent creature in the universe, “Stand in awe, and sin not”?

The atonement has been made, the sacrifice offered, whereby is reconciliation, and the necessity of it was intimated at a very early period of the world’s history,

probably from the beginning, by the institution of sacrifice ; for though there is no distinct record of such a thing, until after the days of the flood, yet the account given of the sacrifice offered by Noah is such as to leave the impression on the reader, that it was a thing not then for the first time instituted, but one with which the patriarch had been antecedently acquainted. Indeed the opinion that sacrifice was offered in Paradise is invested with a very high degree of probability, from the fact of the Lord God clothing the nakedness of our first parents with the skins of animals, naturally suggesting the death of those animals, and that Adam might have been directed of God, though the fact is not recorded, to offer sacrifice, as the friends of Job were, when they had erred by presumptuous and unwise speech concerning the ways of God and His dealings with the children of His grace.

Abel, in bringing the firstlings of his flock to the Lord, and of the fat thereof, carries with it the idea of sacrifice, which receives corroboration from the testimony of Scripture in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it is said in a certain place, that by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain ; and there is another passage in the same Epistle, where the blood of sprinkling of the New Testament is contrasted with that of Abel ; and even supposing the latter be understood as referring to Abel's own life-blood, instead of that of the sacrificial victims, still it would convey an intimation of Abel himself, being as it were a sin-offering, and as such typical of the greater sacrifice to be offered in the end of the world ; nor would it militate against such an idea, but rather confirm it, that the blood of Abel was shed by a

wicked man, who, though his brother in the flesh, was nevertheless of that wicked one who corrupted human innocence; for it was by the instrumentality of wicked men, though brethren in the flesh, that the great sacrifice was offered, and the blood of the Redeemer poured forth.

After the flood, the notices of sacrifice are repeated and frequent, till we reach the days of the national life of Israel, when the sacrifices of the law are exhibited in varied and diversified and perpetual repetition of observance—burnt offering, sin offering, trespass offering, peace offering—all significant of the last and all-important sacrifice, which combines these varied forms in one great offering for the transgressions of mankind; while pre-eminent above all the ancient sacrifices, stands out that of the passover, instituted at the time of the great deliverance, when Israel went out triumphant from the land of Egypt, in the mighty power of God, and observed through all their generations continually, till the offering of the true Paschal Lamb, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times—the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

He only could take it away. Sin could not be remitted (except in a figure) by the paschal sacrifice, nor any of the ancient sacrifices, offered year by year continually; for it is not possible that the blood of bulls, or goats, or lambs should take away sin. Though they were instituted by God Himself, they were only signs, types, figures, to remind the people of God of the evil of sin, that it could only be remitted by a great sacrifice; that so they might look forward to the future, when the

signs and shadows should pass away, and the thing signified be made manifest, clearly, distinctly, certainly.

Now it has been made manifest, long, long ago, even the true, the abiding, the everlasting sacrifice, everlasting—that is, as regards its momentous results, when He came and breathed forth His soul an offering for sin, concerning whom, centuries before His manifestation in the flesh, the angel Gabriel had declared in a message from God to the Prophet Daniel, that He should finish the transgression, make an end of sin, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in an everlasting righteousness.

Once and again it has been said that atonement for sin must be made to God, such as He approves to be consistent with His glory, without which there can be no remission of sins, and also that the guilty never could do it; and therefore, as far as power or might on their part to make atonement was concerned, the forgiveness of man in his transgression had been hopeless as that of the fallen angels.

But what man in his weakness and sin could not do, God has arranged in His own wisdom and love. He has provided the Lamb for a burnt offering, even His beloved Son: “For the Father sent the Son to be Saviour of the world,” and to be the Saviour—by the offering of that one sacrifice, mysterious, transcendental—of everlasting value and virtue, to blot out the sins of millions. And that which God requireth of man is, that he believe that atonement to be a great necessity in the divine moral government for the redemption of the lost; that he accept it as an accomplished fact in the dying of the Lord Jesus, and by steadfast



faith rely on the virtue of it for reconciliation with God.

But though restoration is so connected with the great fact of atonement, that without the latter the former would be impossible, yet it is not to be supposed that the beginning of the work of restoration dates only from the time when an atonement was an accomplished fact; for upon the credit of it, as a great certain futurity in the everlasting counsels, God acted from the very day of man's transgression, which, indeed, as a momentous truth, is involved in the statement contained in the Book of Revelation concerning the Lord Jesus, that He is "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" and so, long before the manifestation of the Redeemer in the flesh, God did many things in connection with human recovery and salvation, of the very highest moment, and exhibited specimens of His power and grace and loving-kindness, such as have been admirable through all succeeding generations.

But if the question be asked, Why was the coming of Christ and the offering of the atonement so long delayed, even for the space of four thousand years from the first intimation of it? perhaps it may not be difficult to assign a reason for it, upon the principle of that gradual development in the works of God, whereby perfection is not reached by an immediate and instantaneous operation, but rather through successive stages, as the flower is unfolded gradually, and the seed germinates and expands in slow and silent growth, and brings not forth the fruit until various processes have been elaborated in the laws of nature; so the atonement was not fully developed

and accomplished until it had been declared in many successive prophecies, with varied revelation of particulars, and exhibited to the human mind in types and figures and ordinances calculated to arrest the attention of the thoughtful, and so prepare the mind and awaken expectation of that which was to be in due time fully developed ; but, beside this general observation, we may find a reason for what, in our estimation, may appear a protracted delay, in this, that the atonement could not take place till such a juncture of circumstances occurred politically, that the two great sections of the human family should together lay their hands upon the great sacrificial victim, intimating thereby the universal character of His atonement, that He died for all. If it had happened when the Jews as a nation were in the plenitude of their power, when in the ingratitude and apostacy of their hearts from God they were persecuting the Lord's prophets, who spake to them in the name of the Lord, it would then appear as if Christ had died for the Jews only, whereas it was God's purpose, as we know certainly, that He should die, not for that nation only, but that He should gather together the children of God that are scattered abroad ; but at the time at which it did occur, it was absolutely necessary that both Jews and Gentiles should act in concurrence, otherwise the life of the Lord Jesus had not been taken away.

As God promised to Abraham that He would give to him and his posterity the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, yet delayed the promise for four hundred years, till the iniquity of the Amorites was full, that righteous judgment on them might coincide with the manifestation of God's grace to His people, to the

glory of His name ; even so the purpose of the Most High concerning the atonement, declared from the beginning, was long delayed in its full development, till that state of things should exist politically and religiously, which should result in the concurrent action of Jews and Gentiles, and so declare and make manifest the universality of the atonement.

Now these things being premised, the work of restoration, ordained of God from the beginning, is carried on by a three-fold activity of operation. There is divine agency secretly working, human instrumentality in manifest operation ; and the intervention of angels as ministers of God, brilliant and dazzling, and powerful as a flame of fire, is not excluded.

The consideration of these will form the subject-matter of the following chapter.





## CHAPTER V.

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Restoration : Varied activity of operation in the great work—The Ministry of Angels—Human Ministry—The Son of God—The Apostles—The Ordained Ministry of the Church—Wisdom and Goodness of God therein manifested—Reference to Irregular Preaching—The Work of Restoration slow and protracted, carried on by steps or stages—The First Step.

**I**N the conclusion of the preceding chapter a three-fold activity of operation was referred to, as standing in connection with the holy work of man's restoration, and the restoration, or, as it is called in Scripture, the restitution of all things. There is divine agency as a thing of necessity ; not only this, there is also, and to a very large extent, human instrumentality ; and in addition to both these, the intervention of angels, as a super-human ministry in the hand of God.

To begin with the last of these first. The doctrine of angelic intervention taught in the oracles of God is one which has been greatly perverted to the degrading of the faith of a Christian, leading men to give to angels the honour which belongs to God alone ; and so it has happened, that the minds of those who are zealous for the glory of God, and the blessed verities of His Word, have been too much turned aside from the subject. The

wise, however, who desire to be instructed in the things of God revealed in the great sanctuary of His truth, will calmly consider what the Bible teaches concerning it.

It teaches undeniably this great truth concerning the angels, that they are "all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

Accordingly we read of their appearing at a very early period of Bible history.

In the morning of creation their rapturous song of joy was heard, according to that which is written, "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" and doubtless, if regret can find a place in the angelic breast, it was not without such an emotion they beheld the disaster of man's transgression; yet they re-appear on the scene of human misery as messengers of mercy, kindness, and grace.

They were seen ascending and descending, from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth, by the patriarch Jacob, in his memorable dream or vision, giving a very significant intimation by their presence on that occasion, that they were occupied about the affairs of those—children of men—with whom God in His grace had entered into covenant.

Passing over a considerable lapse of time in sacred history, they are found in congregated thousands, when God descended in glorious majesty on the Mount Sinai. As the Scripture says, "He shined forth from Mount Paran; He came with ten thousand of saints;" and to this revelation of the saints or holy ones in their attendance on the royal majesty of God, both the martyr Stephen and the Apostle Paul distinctly refer. The former says in his address to the Jewish council, "Ye

received the law by the disposition of angels ;" which word "disposition," probably carries with it the intimation, that there were relays or orders of angels standing in ranks nearer to or further from the central manifestation of God in majesty, according to the dignity of their order, receiving the law from God, and transmitting it *seriatim* from order to order, until it reached Moses.

St. Paul writes in his Epistle to the Galatians in reference to the law, "It was ordained," or disposed, "by angels in the hand of a Mediator," meaning by that, the same truth which was conveyed by the word of Stephen.

But if the angels were connected with the giving of the law on the Mount Sinai, when God descended in His illustrious majesty, no less also with the revelation of the holy Gospel at the birth of the Son of God. Many ancient prophecies received their fulfilment when Christ was born into the world, and that event—to which the believing servants of God had looked forward in all preceding ages—that memorable event was announced by angelic ministry, if not with such universal publicity, and with such terrible grandeur, as the proclamation of the law ; yet with glorious brightness and the voice of triumphant joy, they published the marvellous mystery of godliness, in which the ends of the earth are interested, and throughout all generations.

"There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them : and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all

people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

But beside these memorable manifestations of the angelic ministry, there are repeated narratives in the Scripture of the visits of angels to the servants of God, sometimes conveying glad tidings, sometimes unveiling sorrowful futurities, sometimes ministering to man's bodily necessities, as in the case of Elijah and the Son of God, sometimes warning of danger, sometimes smiting an enemy with the judgment of God, and in one instance bringing to the remembrance of holy women a saying of the Lord Jesus, and in another instance bearing testimony at the time of His ascension to the re-appearing of the Son of God.

They are made manifest at all stages of the history of the Church of God till the days of miraculous intervention were ended ; in the days of the patriarchs ; at the giving of the law ; in the days of the judges ; when the kings reigned, and to the holy prophets repeatedly.

The Angel Gabriel, who spake to Daniel the Prophet of the times of Messiah, re-appears at the threshold of the Christian era to announce the birth of John the Baptist, and the birth of One greater than he, even that Messiah, of whom five hundred years before he had spoken to Daniel.

The Apostles also received visits from angels, and perhaps more frequently than is recorded ; nor do they disappear from the scene altogether till the last glorious

vision given to the great prophet of the New Testament Scriptures, in which they bear a most distinguished part, unfolding the deep, dark mysteries of God, rolling back the veil that hides the distant future, opening the heavens to mortal gaze, declaring the temporary triumph of the wicked, and their ultimate overthrow, the sorrows and sufferings of the saints, and their glorious and triumphant victory at the last. And it is worthy of notice, that though the revelation given to John was the revelation of Jesus Christ, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass, yet it came from the Father through the Son, in the power of the Spirit, and by the ministry of the angels, as in the case of the giving of the law : only there was this difference, that the law came from God through the angels to the Mediator, whereas here the revelation came from God direct to the Mediator, and was by Him transmitted to John through the ministry of angels. Is there not a reason ? Moses was but a servant, faithful indeed, yet a servant ; but Jesus Christ was the Son of God, standing in immediate nearness to the Father.

Although now all angelic intervention in the form of miraculous manifestation is and has been long withdrawn, and angels are no more seen as in bodily form, any more than the Son of God Himself, yet at the time of the end, if not before, they shall re-appear, fulfilling a most important function, executing the wrath of God on the objects of His wrath, casting out of His kingdom all things that do offend and them that commit iniquity, and consigning them to the appointed place, that only the righteous may remain, and shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.



But, in the meantime, is it not true now as in days gone by, that angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? Why should we have a doubt on the subject? If there be still on earth those who are heirs of salvation, why should we hesitate to believe that the angels of God still minister for them, albeit it may be difficult to explain the manner in which they now minister?

The testimony of the Psalmist, however, concerning the care which the angels exercise towards the saints, seems applicable at all times. He writes in the thirty-fourth Psalm, and at the seventh verse—"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them;" which saying the Old Testament strikingly illustrates in the case of the Prophet Elisha, when he was shut up in the city of Dothan, encompassed by his enemies. His servant, a young man, could see nothing but danger, till the Lord, at the request of the prophet, opened his eyes, and then he saw the mountain full of chariots of fire and horses of fire. It was the host of God gathered for the defence of the Lord's prophet.

The Saviour, also, speaking of the little ones, says—"Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven," the meaning of which seems to be, that those little ones are so precious before God, that guardian angels are assigned for their care—even such angels as minister in the presence of God.

That angels may in many cases shield us from danger is not by any means improbable. They may be able to control in a very considerable measure the course of nature, for even man could do this within

certain limits ; and so angels may be able to do it in a far higher degree ; and thus, as the ministers of God, they may protect us from a multitude of unseen dangers, and shield us from violent temptations. The promise, “ He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone ”—though primarily applicable to the Messiah, is doubtless, in a secondary sense, no less so to the members of His mystical body.

Further, it is possible, and not by any means improbable, that they may bring to the remembrance of the heirs of salvation some blessed truth of Holy Scripture for strength, encouragement, and comfort, even as in days gone by they reminded the disciples of a saying, spoken by the Lord Jesus in the days of His earthly ministry. And if an angel appeared to the Son of God in His agony in Gethsemane to strengthen Him, why may not an angel, without actually appearing in the form of bodily manifestation, strengthen the servants of God in some season of trial, not interfering with the work of the Holy Spirit, but ministering in connection with the same, even as the word of the Gospel interferes not with the Divine Spirit, but is subservient to it.

And if there be joy in the breasts of angels over repenting sinners, no doubt there is joy in watching over their steps, as they take their onward course towards the kingdom of heaven ; and, peradventure, when the mortal race is ended, and the spirit released from the ruined tabernacle, the angels may receive the disembodied soul, and carry it into the paradise of God, of

which indeed there is a plain intimation in the Holy Scripture.

Important, however, as the intervention of angels may be, in connection with the work of restoration as ordained of God, the operation of human instrumentality is more important still; nor will the correctness of this statement be doubted a moment, when it is remembered that the illustrious Redeemer of mankind is himself a man; God, indeed, in all His fulness, but man, nevertheless, in the perfection of human nature; even as the Apostle has written, "That which was from the beginning; which we have seen, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."

When He was upon the earth in the life of His manhood, He taught the way of God perfectly, unfolding with marvellous clearness and beauty the character of God as a Being infinitely powerful, infinitely good—His power and goodness extending to every department of creation, making the grass to grow, clothing the lilies with beauty, feeding the ravens, remembering the sparrows, not one of them forgotten before Him, and withal, so loving the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. How admirable the teaching of that holy One, the Son of God, and yet the Son of Man! How sublime, yet simple and impressive! Well was it said by some who went to Him with hostile purpose—"Never man spake like this man." Despised indeed

He was by the proud and self-righteous, but the humble and the meek heard Him with rapt and reverent and breathless attention : they hung upon His words of wisdom and love, for they had the savour of heaven in them. It is testified of Him in His human capacity, and as sustaining a delegated office, that He went about doing good, healing, and blessing, and teaching the things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven.

And now that He has passed from the earth into the heavens, having fulfilled the work of His holy mission here, having made full and perfect satisfaction for the transgression of man to the violated law of God—sitting in exalted majesty in the highest heavens, He still superintends all the affairs of the Church of God upon the earth ; for the Apostle Paul declares in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, that God “ raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all.”

And as this shows most certainly the dignity to which the nature of man, wounded and dishonoured by the primeval transgression, has been restored and exalted in the person of the Redeemer ; so in the same portion of Holy Scripture, the same Apostle testifies of the care and superintendence which the Lord Jesus exercises on behalf of His Church, and the gifts, many and varied, which He has bestowed upon the sons of men for the

benefit thereof; for, referring to an ancient prophecy in the sixty-eighth Psalm, he writes, in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to Ephesians: "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men;" and he then adds, in the eleventh and following verses—"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

But the importance of human instrumentality in that great and wonderful work which God is doing in the earth is further made manifest by the fact, that the Holy Scriptures, the great treasury of divine truth, have been written by men. They, no doubt, were moved by the Holy Ghost and taught of God in various ways; yet the faculties of their minds as men were fully brought into active exercise, so that they were not as mere machines in the hand of God, but active, willing, intelligent fellow-workers with Him.

The importance of the Holy Scriptures as a great element in connection with the grand work of restoration, can hardly be exaggerated. With what power and comprehensiveness this is stated in one brief passage written by St. Paul in his Second Epistle to Timothy, in which he says, that "the Holy Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation," and that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Written not at one particular period, but at divers times, and by different individuals, extending over a range of fifteen hundred years, they nevertheless present the truth of God as one comprehensive whole, though gradually unfolded with an ever-increasing clearness unto the end ; illustrated in history, definitely declared in doctrine, unveiled, more or less distinctly, in the word of prophecy, and all attested by signs and wonders and mighty deeds, the verifying vouchers of God Himself.

When we remember how readily truth is corrupted in this evil world, where there is such abounding error, where he who uttered a lie in the beginning is multiplying lies in varied modifications in every age and generation, and that the miraculous power in attestation of oral truth is and has been long suspended, we may easily understand the magnitude of the blessing God has bestowed upon the Church, in having His holy truth committed, not to the shifting sands of mere oral tradition, but engraven, as in a rock, in the living oracles of the written Word, that that written Word might be handed down unimpaired, at least as far as any momentous matter is concerned, through all generations.

If we had not such a book as this to teach, to guide, to enlighten, to correct, where should we find a corrective for all the various heresies which have been propounded, and seductive errors which have been advanced, in every age to shake the faith of men, and to turn them from the ways of religion and truth ? But in merciful loving-kindness, and in the manifestation of marvellous

wisdom, God has given to us those Holy Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation; and although He could have written them with His own finger, as of old the tables of the Law were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, He has, nevertheless, been pleased to employ the instrumentality of men to translate the holy thoughts of heaven into human language, and for the carrying forward of the great work of God to the end of time, that man in all things might be connected with the recovery of man. "Holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

But human instrumentality, in connection with the great process of restoration, does not end here, but stands out even more perspicuously in a living ministry of the word by human agents.

God has ordained, and Jesus Christ, as the great Head of the Church, has commanded, the word of the Gospel to be preached to every creature, even as He Himself had preached it in the days of His flesh, yea, and even with greater clearness and precision, not, indeed, as if the apostles had received higher gifts and qualifications than their Divine Master, but He, through the Spirit, opened out to their minds the truth of the Gospel with more vivid clearness than He had Himself declared it in the days of His oral teaching, fulfilling the word which He spake to them, while He was yet with them—"The works that I do shall he do also;" (that is His disciple;) "and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father;" for then, having ascended up on high, He would pour out His gifts, many and varied, upon them.

After His ascension, therefore, they went forth to the

work divinely commissioned, divinely taught, divinely qualified for their holy function, by the living and exalted Head, and declared the Gospel of the grace of God as a message of mercy and peace which they had received from on high. In fact, according to the testimony of Scripture, they "preached the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

The living ministry of the word ended not with them. Long, long ago they passed away. After the fulfilment of their holy mission, after they had served their generation, after they had established and vindicated the truth of Christianity, and armour-plated it impenetrably against the fiery bolts of infidelity and misrepresentation, against the cunning craftiness of men, and the insidious wiles of the devil—when, in a word, they had done the work whereunto they were appointed, they passed away in the unwavering hope of the sure and certain reward secured to the steadfast believer in the very religion which they taught. They passed away, but they were succeeded in the ministry of the word by others—not, indeed, gifted as they were—not, indeed, speaking in the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost—not, indeed, invested with power to prove, as in a moment, their accredited ministry by the performance of signs and wonders out of the course of nature, but qualified, nevertheless, to make known to their fellow-men the blessed truth of the Gospel proclaimed from the beginning.

They, in their turn, also passed away, having fulfilled their ministry; but they were followed by others; and so it has been generation after generation, even to this very day, fulfilling the word of prophecy, which said



ages ago, "The Lord gave the word, great was the company of them that published it."

In connection with the ministry of the word there are several points which are specially worthy of attentive observation.

The first is, that the revelation and proclamation of the Gospel, as a message of peace from God to man, lies at the very foundation of his recovery as a sinful being to God. As long as ever he beholds God in the manifestation of His severity, as a just Judge giving to every creature according to his due; and to those who have committed iniquity and obeyed unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that hath sinned, that is, judgment in all penal severity, untempered by the gentleness of mercy, it is impossible that the heart of a sinful man can be attracted to Him. The royal precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength," may be, and it is, holy, just, and good, but it can never awaken a response in the heart of a guilty creature who believes that God stands towards him in a position of implacable hostility. To love under such circumstances would be an absolute impossibility. Only the manifestation of love on the part of God can disarm the enmity of the estranged heart, and quicken a responsive pulsation of love to proffered love. Even between man and man how great is the power of love! Has it not a thousand times won the heart of an enemy, and converted him into a friend? It has touched the heart even of the most obdurate, and relaxed, by its all-softening power, the most sullen and determined obstinacy. But what is the power of human love in

comparison with the divine love? A mighty principle it is—all-powerful, all-constraining, that is to say, when it is believed and felt and realized.

This it is which the Gospel, called in Scripture the Gospel of the grace of God, declares. It declares the love of God to the guilty, the love that hides from the face of God a multitude of sins, and calls the sinner from his enmity back to the bosom of the Creator: for it says—that glorious, wonderful, and incomprehensible love of God, which is in Christ Jesus the Lord, it says to sinful man—I have laid help upon one that is mighty; it says, I have found a ransom for the guilty; it says, I have provided a Saviour; only acknowledge thine iniquity, only turn away thine heart from it, only put thy trust in the name of that precious One, whom I have named, the Redeemer of the lost, and I will receive thee; none of thy sins shall be laid to thine account, for I will be merciful to the unrighteousness of my people, and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.

Such a manifestation and declaration of love once thoroughly believed, what heart can be proof against it? The moment a sinful man can believe that God is love—the moment he can say in the firm conviction of his heart, God has loved me, even me, though I have been rebellious, perverse, disobedient, wayward, I can be saved, I may be saved, and restored ultimately to the possession of perfect joy in the presence and in the approbation of God; that moment there is the beginning of a new life in his soul. He looks up, he breathes freely, he is greatly comforted, sweet peace is imparted to his soul; he says, Thou art God, even my God, though I am unworthy; and therefore, he that believes is said to be quickened to newness of life in Christ Jesus.

There can be no renovation of character without such a faith in the love of God ; but in the vitality of that faith, vitality of character begins in the heart and soul. For then the believer says, I see, I know, I cannot doubt that God hates sin. All creation shows it. The death of the Son of God declares it. The solemn revelation of future judgment terribly confirms it. Though He has in His wondrous mercy made provision for the forgiveness of my sin, and the sins innumerable of multitudes, yet He hates sin. He is of purer eyes than look upon iniquity. Therefore, I also will learn to hate it, both because it is in its nature hateful, and also, because of mercy vouchsafed to me, because of God's redeeming love to my soul. If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more. Sin shall be altogether offensive to me. I will follow the ways of righteousness. I will walk in the commandments of my God. It shall be my earnest aim and endeavour to please and glorify Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.

He tries to do it, honestly, heartily, with zealous and holy purpose ; yet he fails in that at which he aims ; again and again there is failure and short-coming, for the thing that he hates is that which oftentimes he does against his judgment, and against the sanctified desires of his heart ; yet, through oft-repeated failures, still he perseveres, discouraged no doubt on the one hand by the power of temptation, and the innate corruption of the human heart, yet encouraged on the other hand by the certain conviction of the unalterable love of God in Christ Jesus the Lord. If indeed his title to the divine favour depended on the perfection of his obedience, he might well be discouraged, and discouraged even unto

death ; but now he stands before God, accepted in the Beloved, the Son of God, and not on account of his own righteousness ; and he is following after holiness, not to secure that which he has already inalienably in Christ, but that he may be meet in the renovation of his character for the inheritance of the saints in light—meet for the companionship of God, and of the holy and the pure in the kingdom of God. His failures, indeed, and shortcomings, and manifold offences, make him more humble, more anxious, more watchful, more prayerful ; but they no more discourage him to despair than the artist is discouraged, because he fails presently to attain perfection in his art. For what does the artist do ? With unfailing assiduity and irrepressible energy he makes fresh efforts : avoiding, as far as may be, his former faults, and, setting before him for imitation the most perfect models, he advances step by step, still improving day by day ; and by every improvement encouraged more and more, he relaxes not his efforts until he has acquired all the excellence in his art of which he is capable. And so it is with the Christian. Bracing up his mind to renewed energy, not counting himself to have apprehended, this one thing he does after the example of the holy apostle, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching on to those which are before, he presses toward the mark for the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus ; striving, watching, praying, looking to heaven for grace and strength, he is carried on from grace to grace towards the maturity of holiness in the day of Christ. And in this progress towards the grand consummation, he is greatly helped from two principal sources of strength. The first is the Word of God—its blessed doctrines, its

holy precepts, its promises exceeding great and precious, its bright examples of those who are gone before in the race, and have rested at last in the fulness of the hope of glory; and the second is the rich provision of grace, stored in the heart of the Father in heaven, and available for the need of the Christian when, with the voice of prayer and supplication, he cries to God for help. The infidel indeed may sneer and say, "What do these feeble" Christians? "Will they fortify themselves" by prayer? What can prayer do for them? Can it be heard on high? Can it prevail against the ordered course of nature? Can it set aside eternal immutable laws? And these are the objections of the infidel! as if an earthly parent can hear and grant the request of his loved child, and the heavenly Father had so tied up his hands by unalterable laws that He cannot attend to and grant the requests of His beloved children! Who will believe it? As if He had lodged in the human breast an instinctive movement towards the exercise of prayer, with no corresponding intention on His part to meet it! Who will believe it? Or as if the resources of the Almighty were not infinite to answer prayers consistently with non-interference with immutable laws that regulate the universe! Who can doubt it? The infidel may demur; but the Christian believes and knows that there is a power in prayer, and that not in vain God has said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," and that not in vain the Son of God has said, that our Father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; and so by prayer, as the divinely-appointed ordinance, and by the study of the Word as the great instrument of sanctifi-

cation, he is helped on in his progress toward perfection.

But if the character of the message conveyed to sinful man in the word of the Gospel be of the highest possible importance, of scarcely less importance is the fact, that God has committed the ministry of it to men. To men He hath committed the ministry of reconciliation. He might have employed the agency of angels on this holy and momentous mission, just as He commissioned the angel Gabriel to advise the prophet Daniel concerning the times of the Messiah, His death, His sacrifice, and the end and object of that sacrifice; but He has not done so. This ministry has been committed to men, and not to angels, that His own power and grace might be the more abundantly glorified. And this is that which the Apostle Paul declares in his Second Epistle to the Church at Corinth, in which, speaking of the ministers of the Gospel, and of the message with which they had been entrusted, he says: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." The treasure is heaven's treasure, the precious Gospel of Christ, and the earthen vessels are the sons of men.

If God had committed the word of the Gospel and the proclamation of its holy truth to angels that excel in strength, and that are bright in glory, rather than to men, the result following the preaching of the Gospel might have been attributed to the instruments employed, rather than to the character of the message. For if the angels of God had descended from heaven in their majesty, if "the earth had been lightened with their glory," while they called the attention of mankind to

the holy message of the Creator, the whole world had been awed into passive subjection ; even the proud and obdurate and unbelieving had been hushed into silence, as it was in the days of Job : at the sight of the majestic patriarch, says the Scripture, " The young men hid themselves, the aged arose, and stood up, the princes refrained talking, and laid their hand upon their mouth, the nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth ; " so it had been, and much more, at the speech and proclamation of those heavenly visitants ; and thus, instead of " the thoughts of many hearts being revealed," they would rather have been stifled. For whether the heart had been affected or not, there had been, at least, an outward acquiescence, because of inward apprehension and fear ; as is often the case, when an individual in the prospect, or supposed prospect, of approaching death, professes earnest repentance for his past sins, and yet, not unfrequently, the insincerity of that profession is shown, when unexpectedly the danger of death is removed, and health restored.

But now has God ordained that the Gospel be preached to mankind by men of like passions, by those " whose terror shall not make them afraid, neither shall their hand be heavy upon them," in order that faith may have its perfect operation, and that unbelief in its rebellious spirit may also be made manifest, so that whatever saving, wholesome effect is produced upon the human heart, it may be evidently by the truth, and not by the instrument employed to declare that truth. For it is the truth, whether spoken in accents of flowing eloquence by an Apollos, mighty in the Scriptures, and

mighty in attractive human speech, or whether it be conveyed in plain, simple, unadorned language by one who has a stammering and unattractive utterance, it is the truth, even the truth of the Gospel, in its gentle but most persuasive power of divine love, which wins its way to the human heart, and becomes mighty as an instrument of God to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

And while the ministry of the word specially redounds to the glory of God by being committed to men rather than to angels, so further there is a special fitness in the appointment of those who have been themselves made wise unto salvation, who have themselves tasted that the Lord is gracious. Who more meet than they to declare to their fellow-men the treasure they have found in finding the Lord, and apprehending the love of God in the Gospel? It is such, and only such, that are properly qualified to preach the holy word of the Gospel.

And in connection with the ministry of the word, the wisdom of God is manifested very strikingly in this—that He has set apart a special order of men for the unfolding of the truth of the Gospel, and the expounding of the Holy Scriptures.

The sin of man—that is, of our first parent, has introduced into the world an element of laborious occupation, affecting more or less all classes. But the majority are so engaged in things pertaining to this life, and indeed things necessary for their very existence, and there is such an unceasing continuity of



labour, that even if they be ever so earnestly inclined to the holy things of religion, it is but a scanty portion of their time they can allot to the investigation of the mysteries of their faith, not to say that many are quite unfitted for it, through the want of the necessary education ; though, no doubt, even the elementary art of reading is very useful, and will result in great advantage to everyone who, with humility of mind, and with thoughtful seriousness and earnest prayer, reads the Holy Scriptures of truth ; but experience most certainly shows how few of those who labour for their daily subsistence in the sweat of their brow, give even ordinary attention in their leisure hours to a thoughtful searching of the Word of God. As a matter of fact, the great majority of mankind, even of professing Christians, take religion upon trust, and perhaps, also, as a matter of necessity, in the present constitution of things, at least as far as the elementary principles of it are concerned, until they come experimentally to know the vitality of it, under the influence of a teaching which is not of earth.

Seeing then these things are so, how important it is, and wise as well as important, in the gracious dealings of the merciful God with the guilty and the fallen, that a class should be set apart, ordained according to the Divine appointment, for the special study of the sacred Scriptures ; that they should be separated as much as possible from secular things, and addicted to the ministry of the word, for the instruction of the masses of the people ; allotted provision being made for them, according to an ordinance of God, that they lack not the carnal things of earth necessary to this present life,

while they minister to their fellow-men in spiritual things.

There are indeed those in the present day who would entirely dispense with a paid ministry; but it shows manifestly a want of wisdom concerning this matter, and is quite at variance with the ordinance of God; for, as the Apostle Paul declares, "The Lord hath ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," and not by any worldly calling. Nor is this peculiar, even to the dispensation of the Gospel, for referring to that of the Law, He says—"Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?"

No doubt it sometimes happens, from the scanty liberality of Christians—of those who profess to believe in and to value the Gospel, that the ministers of the word are obliged to resort to some worldly occupation to help out the short pittance which they receive for the work of the ministry; but this, while on the one hand it reflects dishonourably on those who ought to be ready to help the ministers of Christ, so on the other hand it is calculated to weaken the ministry, and make it less efficient, because that time which might be most profitably employed in the study of the sacred Scriptures, and in preparation for the work of the holy office, and the public and private discharge of its sacred duties, is employed in endeavouring to obtain, by lawful and honest industry, the things pertaining to this life.

If indeed the ministers of the Gospel were now under the special inspiration of the Spirit of God, special and miraculous as the apostles of old, there might be less

objection to their helping themselves in the providing of the necessities of life, that they might not be in any way a burden to others. But though the Apostle Paul might work at his occupation as a tent-maker, because he was always ready, even without previous study, to declare the testimony of the Gospel, and expound the Holy Scriptures, being specially taught of the Holy Ghost, yet the same rule cannot apply to those who must, by diligent study and searching of the Scripture, acquire that necessary knowledge which came to the apostle by immediate inspiration. But if the ordinance—that the ministers of the Gospel should live of the Gospel—applied even to the earliest days of Christianity, with all the special helps then given from heaven, how much more at the present time !

But, again, there are others who regard the ministry of the word such a free and open thing, that they think that anyone may minister in the things of the Gospel, and preach with authority the Word of God, whether he be outwardly ordained to the sacred function or not. The only question with them is this—Does a man know the Gospel—know it experimentally? Is he a man of piety and prayer? Then he may go forth, and freely preach the word wherever an opportunity is afforded to him—that is, wherever he can find a congregation of willing listeners.

But without raising the question, whether those who have received no outward form of ordination, and who have not been set apart specially by lawful authority to declare the word of the everlasting Gospel, are warranted in assuming the sacred functions of the ministry; or

even supposing that this were a point conceded, and that they are authorized so to do, it would nevertheless remain a thing of the very highest moment, that there should be an order specially set apart for this very work, whose defined office and business it should be to preach and to teach the word of the Gospel. For whatever approbation and admiration may be given to the efforts of zealous-hearted servants of God, whose souls, fired with divine love, are constrained to utter the word of earnest testimony to their fellow-men, yet it is evident that such erratic and eccentric efforts, even though acknowledged and blessed of God, can reach only to comparatively few: but when the people of a kingdom or country are to be instructed in things pertaining to salvation, and when the young are to be educated in the knowledge of the Holy Scripture, how can this be effected, even approximately effected, without an established ministry, a body of men educated and trained, and ordained to holy functions, and giving themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word.

To institute a parallel between the body and the soul: if it be necessary for the health of a community that there should be a class of persons educated and trained, who have carefully studied theoretically and practically all the departments of the healing art, and whose qualifications are certified by the highest authorities, as distinguished from those puffing empirics who are evermore advertising their infallible nostrums, and if the more advanced the education, and the more distinguished the qualifications, the higher they are held in estimation, and the more likely they are to be successful in the treatment of disease and the promotion of health, why

should it not be equally necessary for the health of the soul, and the interests of morality and religion, that there should be ministers of the Gospel trained and educated in all things connected with their holy profession, studying and searching out the mysteries of the faith in the Scriptures of truth, and declaring them to others for their benefit and instruction? The efforts of such, animated with the spirit of love and earnest piety, will, with the divine blessing, result in unspeakable good.

Now, in point of fact, an established ordained ministry has existed from the beginning, and through all generations of the Church of God; and we have the strongest reason for believing that this is in accordance with the will and appointment of the great Head of the Church. We cannot doubt that the Apostle Paul was acting under the direction of the Holy Ghost, when he gave instructions, and a charge to Timothy and Titus, to ordain elders for the congregation of the Lord in various places dispersed. If so, it would set at defiance all reasonable probability for any to imagine that this was to be limited to the primitive age of Christianity; for if the churches needed pastors and ministers then, is not the need equally strong in every age? But the matter is put even beyond the possibility of doubt by the fact, that an established order of ministry is recognized by our Lord Jesus Christ, as existing at the time of His re-appearing, and existing by His authority. In one of His latest discourses addressed to His disciples at the close of His public ministry, He says, "Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh," referring to His Second Advent. And

He adds—"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord has made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing. Verily, I say unto you, that He shall make him ruler over all his goods. But, and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming, and shall begin to smite His fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Who can doubt, from a perusal of this passage of Scripture, that the Lord recognizes a ministry existing at the time of His Second Advent? There are servants set over the household; some are wise and faithful, and some are evil. Who are these but ministers of God? But there is more than this. These servants are set over the household by the authority of Christ, and invested by Him with a delegated authority. But this can only be by an authority originally given, and transmitted *seriatim* generation after generation, so preserving an ordained ministry in the Church of God. Surely then, it is not enough for the exercise of ministerial functions, that a man say, I am a Christian, a follower and servant of the Lord Jesus; I will minister in the congregation of the Lord. That would be like Adonijah, exalting himself, because he was the Son of David, without authority, and saying, I will be king. But if any man lay claim to a right to minister in the Church, it may be lawfully asked of him, Who gave you authority

so to do? Is it enough to answer, I feel an inward call and qualification? Anyone can say that. Is that, then, a sufficient answer? The only way in which the right to minister can be maintained and vindicated, is either by miracles, which would be the immediate and unquestionable attestation of God, or by the transmission of authority from the beginning, which is the remote, but not less certain, sanction of the Son of God. The existence, however, of a lawful, ordained ministry does not of necessity imply that the ordination should come by the hands of a bishop, but it does imply that it should at least come through those who have been themselves designated lawfully to the sacred office.

Enough has been said to show that the ministry of the Word of God, by those who are virtually the ambassadors of God, though clothed in the nature of man, is a thing of the very highest importance. Scarcely less so is the intervention of angels, though there is more of obscurity in connection with their operation; but important above all is the Divine agency. And by the Divine agency it is not intended to express that general agency, whereby God is present in mysterious but necessary operation in every department of universal nature; but one that is special and peculiar in connection with His pre-determined purpose of restoration, and the carrying out of that purpose.

If it be true with regard to our natural existence that in God we live and move and have our being, it is no less so with regard to our spiritual and eternal existence; and the mysterious influence of the Holy Spirit of God pervades every department of operation in the blessed work of restoration.

The Spirit of the Lord God was in the prophets when they testified of Christ, of the sufferings of the Son of God and the glory which should follow, and of the blessed results of His holy sacrifice, which should reach through endless ages.

And He was with them also and in them when they wrote the Holy Scriptures for the instruction both of their own and future generations, that the truth of God might be stereotyped beyond the power of wicked men utterly to corrupt or obliterate it, and that so it might be a witness against all heresy contrary to the doctrine of God, and all vice and licentiousness, and everything at variance with the purity of the divine commandment.

The Spirit of the Lord God was also upon Christ in the manifestation of His human nature. Under the leading and impulse thereof, He went up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Afterwards, in the power of the same Spirit, He returned to preach the Gospel, and entering the synagogue at Nazareth, and unfolding the roll of the ancient Scripture, He read that remarkable prophecy that referred to His holy office, and the full development of His wonderful salvation, and the co-operation of the Spirit in the same—"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

The Spirit of the Lord God was with those also whom the Son of God accredited as His holy apostles, to



declare to mankind the testimony of that work which He had accomplished ; to make known unto men how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ; how He rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures ; how He hath ascended into the highest heavens, and sitteth at the right hand of God ; that by Him is reconciliation with God, even the Father ; through Him salvation for the chief of sinners ; and that there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved. The Spirit of the Lord was with them according to the certain promise of Christ, and through the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, so they published the word of the Gospel.

Is He not even now with the ministers of the Gospel, if not in plenary manifestation as in the apostles, whereby they did miracles and signs and mighty deeds to command the attention of men—yet truly and really to qualify them for their high and holy office ? for without that Spirit how could they be qualified ? Though much stress has been laid on training and education, yet all the training and education in the world, under the most gifted director of education, can never make good ministers of Jesus Christ. That is the work of the Divine Spirit moving on their hearts, inspiring them with holy zeal, opening the Scriptures to their understandings, that they may declare with wisdom and earnestness, and love to God and man, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

But beside all this, the Spirit of God works upon the heart of every one who hears the Gospel to profit and to the salvation of his soul. What is said in the Scripture of Lydia, that the Lord opened her heart to

attend to the things spoken of Paul, is true of every one who savingly embraces the truth of the holy Gospel. It is the Lord the Spirit that opens the understanding, that opens the heart to believe, and practically to obey the truth as it is in Jesus. For although it is perfectly true, according to what has been stated, that the love of God in Christ, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, thoroughly believed, will issue, not only in peace and joy, but also in entire change of heart and renovation of character; yet who are they who believe that love, but those in whose hearts the Spirit of God works mightily and effectually, scattering the dark shadows of unbelief, that the light of love and truth may shine into the innermost parts of the heart? for if, as it is written, "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the heart, much more the Spirit of the Lord." Is it not a matter of solemn and undeniable experience, that thousands who have the high privilege of hearing the declaration of the marvellous love of God in Christ in the word of the Gospel, nevertheless, believe not? some offended by the deep mysteries of divine truth, some stumbled by the self-denying doctrines of the Gospel, some, their mind so occupied by the business or pleasures of the world, that they give no serious heed to the things pertaining to the Kingdom of Christ, and some, deluded by the fantasies of science, falsely so called, whereby they think that the revelation of God given in the Bible is at variance with the revelation of God given in the universe of nature.

But be the cause what it may, the fact is undeniable, and as solemn as it is certain, that multitudes hear and believe not. In all generations it has been so. It is so

even now. They only believe, to whom God has given a heart to believe; they only to whom He has given the new heart; they only to whom He has imparted His Holy Spirit, that they might be born again unto faith in the Son of God, that they might become, in the vitality of that faith, and by the power of the Divine Spirit, the children of God.

The importance of this appears plainly in the declaration made by the Lord Jesus concerning the necessity of the new birth. The earliest word of instruction which He spake to the Jewish ruler, who came to seek from Him information in matters of religion, was this—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and He added further in the word of explanation—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

There can be no restoration of the soul of man, no renovation of the human character, without the inward working of the Spirit of God in regeneration. That regeneration is incipient life in the soul of him that believeth in Christ. And the work of the Spirit, beginning in regeneration, is carried forward by the same Spirit through every stage of the Christian life—from the nonage of infancy, when the believer is a babe in Christ, until he attain maturity in the full development of life.

The Spirit of God who regenerates is He also who sanctifies; for what is sanctification but developed regeneration, as we may say of regeneration that it is incipient sanctification. It is the Spirit of God who sanctifies. By Him the Christian mortifies the deeds of the body, and at the same time follows after that

holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. The instrument, indeed, is the truth, therefore also the Lord prayed for His disciples—"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth;" but the divine Agent is the Spirit of God. He is in the Christian the Spirit of faith and hope and prayer, inciting his mind, quickening his heart more and more after heavenly things. By the Spirit he believes in God, and in the Son of God. By the same Spirit he loves God, and Jesus Christ, whom the Father has sent to be the Saviour of the world. By the same Spirit also he loves the brethren. By the same Spirit he contends against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Believers are strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man; and by that Spirit, Christ dwells in their heart by faith; and if they persevere to the end, and win the golden prize of life and glory, it is by the operation of the same divine agency, even the Spirit of the living God.

Thus, then, that work of restoration, which has been predetermined of God from the beginning, which had been foretold in the Scriptures, which speak of the restitution of all things—that work is carried on by this threefold energy of operation: God is at work; man is at work; and the holy angels also, from the beginning, even until now; and so they shall be until the final consummation.

But not as the creation, so is the restoration. Touching the former: in six days God made heaven and earth; not those monster extensions of duration, which are but the fabulous dreams of a vain and imaginative geology—unreal as the fantastic shapes which our

fancies mould, as in a dreamy mood we gaze on the red embers of a bright fire—but in six natural days God made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all the things that are therein, man and beast and creeping things, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea—everything perfect in its kind ; paradise, also, in all its beauty and freshness. And everything was good which God had made, till sin entered and cast a blot on the beautiful, a shadow on the bright, and raised the wail of woe where the voice of joy and song had resounded. Touching the restoration : nearly six thousand years have passed over, and the dreadful ravages of sin are still mournfully apparent ; yea, often the work of deterioration seems to go on more rapidly than that of restoration.

Nearly six thousand years have passed, and what small progress seems to have been made in the work of restoration ! What a vast amount of the world's population is still in heathen darkness ! Hundreds of millions there are who have never heard of the name of the Saviour. Millions are living, as millions of their fathers lived before them, under the delusive and vain teaching transmitted from a false prophet, who, appearing in the sixth century, and professing to receive revelations from God, established a religion which has maintained a disastrous sway in the world ever since, over a multitude which no man can number. And then—of those who do profess the Christian faith—how many millions there are who hold it in corruption, believing doctrines which the apostles never taught—doctrines which are not written in the sacred Scriptures, but rather at variance with what is recorded there—

doctrines dishonouring to God and to our Lord Jesus Christ, and subversive of faith and morals. And of the multitudes who profess the purer form of faith, and acknowledge the certainty of the things written in the Bible, and avow their belief that salvation is only by Christ, through faith in His name, even of such how few appear to be practically influenced by the great truths they profess to believe; how few, how very few there are, whose hearts appear to be affected by the love of God, and whose lives seem to indicate that they are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. On the contrary, how many walk now, as in the days of the Apostle Paul, in such a way, that while they profess to be Christians, "they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction; whose god is their belly; whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things."

And this—the apparently small progress of the work of God in the earth—is one of those things which may make the proud infidel to scoff, and treat the grand and holy verities of the Word of God as if they were fabulous conceits of hot-headed enthusiasts.

But is the slow progress of the work any sufficient reason for doubting the revelation of God, as to the ultimate fulfilment of that which He has declared in His Word and by His servants?

Let us remember the impressive and instructive words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how he said in His doctrine, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth

bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

How beautifully does this parable exhibit the operation of God in nature in the way of successive development. The seed is sown—it grows. Yet the most minute attention and observation cannot see the actual growth. It can only trace it from one marked step to another. Yet it grows every day, every hour, every moment; by night and by day it is ever growing, ever advancing, though much time elapses before the point of perfection and maturity is reached.

And so it is in the great work of restoration. The most minute and careful attention cannot discover the momentary and instantaneous progression of the work. Only when we look back over an interval of time, and compare the present with the past, can we discover the progress that has been made; yet it is progressing—every hour and every moment unto perfection and maturity. But who shall say when that point of perfection shall be attained? Who shall declare when the harvest shall be ripe?

The truth is—that God is carrying on now, as He has been from the beginning, the great work of restoration by successive steps or stages.

The first step concerns the soul of man and the rudimental renovation of his character. This is the work, or the part of the great work, which has been going on from the earliest days of man's history after the fall, through the Patriarchal, the Levitical, and the Gospel dispensations; those dispensations being themselves

successive developments in the gracious operations of God, whereby He has revealed more and more clearly His marvellous love to man, and the way of everlasting salvation, through the one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.

Through all the several dispensations God has been engaged in attracting souls to Him from the mass of an ungodly world, revealing His grace to them and in them, and renewing them by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Whether the word has been ministered by the prophets of the Old Testament dispensation ; or by John the Baptist, the herald of the New ; or by the Son of God Himself ; or by His holy apostles after Him ; or by evangelists, pastors, doctors, and reformers through successive ages—there has been the one object aimed at : to awaken souls, to enlighten them, to convert them to God, that they may shine forth in the future ages as the blessed, the beloved, the sanctified of God the Father, and the saved in Christ Jesus. It is a great preparatory work, carried forward under the royal direction of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And like as Solomon of old had thousands, and tens of thousands, bearing burdens, hewing wood, preparing costly stones for the building of his magnificent temple, that everything might be ready to hand when they began to build, so has the Son of God thousands and tens of thousands, ministers of His blessed Gospel, preparing the splendid materials of that holy temple which shall stand out in eminence, beauty, grandeur, glory, and most costly magnificence ; the admiration of universal creation, over which angelic beings shall sing hallelujahs of endless rapture.



It is a great preparatory work. It is the first step in the wonderful work of restoration. But even that first step is not and shall not be perfected till all the elect are gathered in, till all the children of God that are scattered through the kingdoms of the earth are brought in faith and knowledge and love to the Lord Jesus. There is great opposition. There is most malignant enmity. Principalities and powers of the unseen world are using the giant energies of their mighty intellects to hinder the work, by delusion, by persecution, by the seductions of pleasure, by temptation, in ever-varying modification; but forward, forward it still goes, even the work of God. As the tide advances slowly, mightily, irresistibly, in spite of repulsive winds, so God works, and will work, in spite of all opposition and hindrance, till all His elect are converted; and then, but not till then, the first step shall be accomplished in the holy and benignant purpose of restoration.





## CHAPTER VI.

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Restoration : Second Step—Re-appearance of the miraculous element—  
The Coming of the Son of God in glory—The Resurrection of the  
Dead—Infidel Questionings—Reference to the Resurrection of  
Christ.

**T**HE Son of God shall re-appear in the latter day, even He who came in the flesh ages ago that He might fulfil all righteousness. And He did so, and glorified His Father in heaven, and by His obedience unto death He redeemed man. Then He departed out of the world. But He shall re-appear. So the holy angels, the ministers of God in heaven, testified to the apostles, the ministers of God on earth, at the time of His ascension, when He went up to the right hand of power. They said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go up into heaven." It was a prophecy pronounced by them. It is a prophecy still. It has not been fulfilled, but it shall be in the time appointed of the Father. When that time shall be no man can tell. The times and the seasons the Father has put in His own power. But the fulfilment of it shall be an event of unparalleled magnificence and splendour, for it shall surpass anything that has been from the foundation of the world.

The most illustrious manifestation of glory which the earth ever witnessed in the days gone by, was when the Almighty descended in royal majesty on the Mount Sinai, and the thousands of Israel beheld the glory of the Lord like devouring fire on the summit of the mountain. The scene is described with most impressive solemnity in the direct history of it in the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Exodus. It is referred to also in other places in the Bible, and always in such a way as to convey to the mind all that is solemn, grand, and glorious. Thus Moses, in his concluding address to Israel, reminding them of it, says, "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Mount Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousand of His saints. From His right hand went a fiery law." There is also an obvious allusion to it in the Book of the Prophet Habakkuk, where it is written by the prophet: "God came from Teman, and the holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise." Likewise, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, there is a most impressive reference to that stupendous and marvellous manifestation of God, where the sacred writer says, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words . . . . And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake."

But grander, and more glorious and impressive shall be the Advent of the Son of God in the latter day. For He shall come in the glory of the Father, and in His own glory, and in that of the holy angels. To this,

doubtless, the Psalmist refers in the word of holy prophecy, when he writes : " Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence, a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him." And whereas, the revelation of God on the Mount Sinai was witnessed only by a few thousands of the human family, the Advent of the Son of God in the bright blaze of His glory shall be apparent to the ends of the earth. So He has Himself declared in His memorable prophecy, written in the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel : " As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

" He shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."

" The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire."

" Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him."

Such are some of the testimonies of Holy Scripture, concerning the Advent of the Son of God ; but they abound, and not only in the New Testament Scriptures, they are the repeated theme also of Old Testament prophecies. Sublimity and grandeur and glory and power and victory and triumph and joy, and no less terror, are for evermore associated with that wonderful futurity of the Word of God.

At the coming of the Lord Jesus, at the revelation in glory of Him whose name has been sounding in the earth for more than eighteen hundred years, as a name of power unto the salvation of all that believe, the second

grand step shall be taken in connection with the work of restoration. And here we come at once within the range of the miraculous. There are lightnings and thunders and voices and the sounding of trumpets out of the sanctuary of God. There is shaking in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath. The uniform current of human affairs is disturbed. There is agitation, and perplexity, and profound uneasiness. There are manifestations to which the world has been unaccustomed for ages and generations. It is the opinion of some that miracles will be re-produced in the latter days of the present dispensation; that the wicked that are in the earth will have the power of doing signs and wonders to deceive mankind with what the Scripture calls "the deceivableness of unrighteousness;" and that on the other hand, there will be a countervailing power in the Church of God to perform still greater miracles, in attestation of holy truth, even as the miracles of Moses surpassed those of the magicians of Egypt, and at last suspended their action altogether.

But whether this be so or not, whether the attesting seal of God to His truth shall thus be given into the hands of men, or whether things will proceed, as now they are proceeding, and as they did in the days before the flood, without any interference with the established order of nature, yet this is altogether certain, that at the second coming of the Lord Jesus, the Lord from heaven, there shall be an exhibition of miraculous power, entirely surpassing anything that has ever been seen since the day that God created man upon the earth.

In that day, that great day, thenceforward for ever memorable, the Son of God shall call to His sleeping

saints, all that have fallen asleep from the beginning to the end; and in the working of that mighty power, whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself, He shall raise their dead bodies to life and immortality. In that day He shall speak according to that which is written in ancient prophecy, "Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead." In the days of His flesh on earth He said once to a dead man, "Lazarus, come forth," and the dead was wakened to life, after he had been dead four days. In that day he shall say, My people, come forth, and they shall come forth from all the hiding-places of death in the wide world. From the innumerable graves of earth, from the unfathomed depths of the ocean, from the retired fastnesses of the wilderness, from the trackless expanse of the arid desert, from every island, and every continent, from every city and town and village, they shall come forth at the call of the royal Master. The sea shall give up her dead, and death and the grave shall give up their dead. Then also the mortal shall put on immortality, and the corruptible shall put on incorruption; and so death shall be swallowed up in victory! Oh! what a day that will be! Oh! what a manifestation of miraculous power it will be, when the millions that have fallen asleep in hope, from the days of Adam downward, shall be raised in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; men of all climes and nationalities, under the face of the whole heaven, to form the universal family of God among men; the general assembly and Church of the First-born, perfect in all its members—not one member wanting.

desires of our souls after them. We call to remembrance in the bitterness of grief, days of gladness and sweet communion, which we had with them while yet they breathed the breath of this mortal life, and answered love with love. We think, we gaze on fond mementoes which bring them back with impressive vividness upon the memory of our hearts, till in the beautiful words of Holy Scripture, our eyes become as a fountain of tears. Alas! alas for the loved ones! but our tears reach not to them. The voice of weeping, though it may terribly affect the living, is lost in the depths of the stillness of the dark grave. They are gone. They come not again; not for the call of love; not for the voice of most bitter lamentation. We shall go to them; but they shall not return to us.

It is the repetition of this never-ceasing experience, it is the continued operation of this law of mortality through perpetual generations, which, to the unreflecting, and to those who fail to take a comprehensive view of the ways of God, makes it appear incredible that God should raise the dead. Yet, why should it be incredible? Why should it even seem to be incredible? Why should we infer, as if it were a thing of certainty, that a law, or a series of laws, which the Almighty has put into operation, should abide for evermore? Why may they not, after a given number of years, after a definite term of duration, be superseded by another series of laws?

Could we conceive an inexperience in this world which never knew of death, which had never seen it in man or beast, never heard of it, such an inexperience, observing the functions of healthy matured animal life, continuing year after year with unabated vigour, might infer, and

most likely would infer, that it would go on so *ad infinitum*. Yet the incorrectness of that inference would be made manifest very soon by the revelation of the solemn fact of death. But may there not, in like manner, be an inexperience which infers, without sufficient grounds, that the law of death, perpetuated for many generations, will continue *ad infinitum*? And yet, in the end, it might be found that that law was only intended to continue for a series of ages, then to be superseded by another, even the law of resurrection.

But why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? Let it be remembered, that though God pronounced death by His royal fiat upon man for his transgression, though He said to Adam, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," entailing, by the pronouncement of that sentence, death upon his posterity in each succeeding generation, yet He never said of man, that He should not rise again from the dead. If, indeed, God had said—Man shall die, and for evermore, and never again be raised from the dead, then, indeed, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead had been a thing incredible; yea, for it would have involved an impossibility, in that it would have assumed that God would falsify His own word. But now we know that God hath not said—He never said—Man shall not rise again; and that being so, the question may be confidently pressed, Why should it be incredible that God should raise the dead?

If it redound to the glory of His great name; if it tend to manifest more abundantly His power, wisdom, and goodness; or if it exhibit these in a way in which no other act of creation does, if it magnify Him in the



eyes of millions of His intelligent creatures ; yea, if it give a vocal utterance of praise to those who are raised, such as belongs to no other of the creatures of His hand, even the most exalted ; above all, if while it magnifies the riches of His grace, it elucidates in a marvellous way some of the deep and perplexing mysteries of His moral government, giving a brilliant reward to distinguished virtue and religion, such as never was assigned to it, and never could be, in the time of this mortal life ; then, under those circumstances, so far from its being incredible that God will raise the dead, it becomes in the highest degree probable, and prepares the mind for the certain testimony of His Word, that all that are in their graves shall come forth, that those who sleep in the dust of death shall be awakened.

And this testimony, in itself certain, as the testimony of God in His Word, is more abundantly confirmed specially to the heirs of promise ; but to all, likewise, who will examine the matter with a reasonable and candid spirit, by the fact recorded in the Bible, that the law of mortality has been already, in some few instances, superseded by the law of resurrection. In the Old Testament Scriptures there are three cases on record of those who had died and yet revived again, and in the New Testament there are still more. But above all, One has been raised from the dead who is spoken of as the first fruits of the mighty harvest. On the former cases we need not dwell, because it could not be determined, certainly, whether they went back again to the cold, dark grave ; but with regard to the latter, it is certain that He “being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him.” He

liveth in the power of an endless life, even Jesus whom the Father "hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." No, not possible, He having endured the penalty of the broken law, and satisfied to the uttermost the inexorable demands of justice. And so He has been raised, "now no more to return to corruption;" raised from the dead triumphantly and victoriously, despite the power of hell and Satan.

It is a grand fact in Christian history which has been verified by evidence—clear and decisive evidence which cannot be set aside—evidence which must command the attention and convince the judgment of every unprejudiced mind; by the testimony of many witnesses; by the testimony of many bodily senses; by the repeated manifestation of His own bodily presence, sometimes to one, sometimes to two, sometimes to many, extending over the space of forty days, and in divers places; by the irresistible conviction forced on the mind of one that was incredulous, of one who refused the testimony of others, of one who said, in the austere demand for the highest and most unquestionable evidence, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe," but who afterwards, when his demand was gratified, said, "My Lord and my God."

With what condensation of unanswerable argument the Apostle Paul puts the matter when he says, writing to the Corinthian Church concerning the resurrection of Christ, "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present,

but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

He was not indeed seen by all the people, that is, by the people of the Jewish nation; and this very circumstance is distinctly adverted to by the Apostle Peter, for he says, "Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." But though the apostle adverts to the circumstance, and in a marked manner, as if he would draw particular attention to it, yet he does not declare the reason or the reasons why God did not show Him after His resurrection to all the people. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to assign reasons, and very sufficient ones. Some, indeed, may be ready to say, Why not? and would it not have been most conclusive evidence? And yet, could we certainly affirm that if he had been so manifested, it would have produced conviction in the Jewish mind? If they resisted the accumulated evidence of a multitude of miracles—miracles of most varied and striking character; if actually, in the invincible obstinacy and prejudice of their minds, they attributed to satanic agency the clear manifestation of the divine power, would they have certainly believed if they had seen the Lord Jesus after His resurrection? He Himself said, in the course of His teaching, though He puts the doctrine into the mouth of Abraham, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." But even if faith had been a natural, yea, a certain sequence of His manifestation to the

people in resurrection life, yet it may have been, and no doubt was, a righteous thing on the part of God to withhold that evidence as a punishment for their pride, perverseness, obstinacy, and unbelief, and because they knew not, when they ought to have known, the day of their visitation. Beside this, there is yet another reason why He was not revealed to the people after His resurrection and before His ascension into heaven, and that is, that it would have antedated the great purpose of God, in reference to which purpose the Lord Himself said, when He left the temple for the last time—"Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." By-and-by He will be manifested to the people. In that day the veil shall be taken away from their hearts, and then they shall see clearly and believe certainly. But there will be occasion to advert to this more particularly in another place; here it is noted only incidentally as a reason why after His resurrection the Lord was not manifested to all the people. They shall indeed see Him, though they see Him not now, and have not since the day of His resurrection; no—nor since the day they crucified Him in the bitterness of their malice. But though God showed Him not openly to all the people, yet He did to chosen witnesses, who had clear and certain evidence of His resurrection.

And those chosen witnesses who saw Him, and saw Him repeatedly, and handled Him, and talked with Him, and ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead, they went forth and bore testimony, and with great power they gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and confirmed their testimony by signs

and wonders and deeds of mighty power, and not only so, but by their readiness to suffer for the testimony of that great truth, and by their actual suffering. Did they not believe? Were they not thoroughly persuaded? Did they not know certainly that they had seen Christ Jesus the Lord after He had been raised from the dead? Could they not have said, in the words of the Lord Himself, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen"? And that testimony has come down through all generations. It is not impaired by the lapse of ages. It has not been falsified. It has not been exaggerated. For it has not come down by the loose transmission of mere oral tradition, but it is written, and has been written from the beginning, in the Book of God, in the Holy Scriptures of truth, that men may understand and consider and believe and know the greatness of the power of God, and the greatness of the power of Him who has been raised from the dead.

This one great fact firmly grasped and thoroughly believed as an indubitable certainty, where is there room for incredulity in reference to the future, the resurrection of the dead? Who that has seen the first fruits of the harvest gathered, doubts that in due time the harvest itself shall be gathered in its fulness?

Christ has been raised from the dead, seen of men, seen of many men, of witnesses chosen of God, witnesses of unimpeachable veracity; and that fact, certified as a fact, how it verifies the word spoken by the Lord Jesus, while yet He exercised His ministry on the earth, "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day"! and with what

definite certainty it invests the word written by His holy apostle, touching the future resurrection ! Thus has he written in his first Epistle to the Church at Corinth—  
 “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order : Christ the first fruits ; afterwards they that are Christ’s at His coming.” Even so. Amen. Now it is the privilege of the true Christian, assured of the divine promise of resurrection, confirmed as it is by the fact of the Saviour’s resurrection—now it is his privilege to say, in the beautiful language of a memorable hymn—

“ I shall not in the grave remain,  
 Since Thou death’s bonds hast severed.  
 By hope with Thee to rise again,  
 From fear of death delivered,  
 I’ll go to Thee where Thou art,  
 Live with Thee, from Thee never part ;  
 Therefore, to die is rapture,  
 And thus to Jesus Christ I’ll go.  
 My longing arms extending  
 So fall asleep  
 In slumber deep,  
 Slumber that knows no ending,  
 Till Jesus Christ, God’s only Son,  
 Opening the gates of bliss, leads on  
 To heaven—to life eternal.”

In that day He shall open the gates of bliss, when He opens also the prison-house of the grave to set at liberty the captive bodies of His saints. At the coming of Jesus Christ from heaven with all His saints, the

dead in Christ shall be raised, they, that are truly His, they who believed in Him, while yet they lived in their mortal bodies, not with the barrenness of a mere formal profession, but with the vitality of a fructifying faith. They believed in Him. They loved Him. They followed Him—some with unwavering constancy to the martyr's death—all of them in self-denial, in humility, in holy service, with patient perseverance to the end, learning with the apostle to count the things which would be gain in an earthly point of view, but loss in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, it being the most earnest desire of their heart to win Him, and to be found of God in Him; so when He comes in the glory of His kingdom, He will acknowledge them as His, and call them forth to meet Him in His majestic descent to earth, breathing the breath of immortality into their mortal bodies, or that which is the seminal dust of those mortal bodies, in the very act of raising them—transmuting them, as the Scripture says, "He shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

That will be the consummation of their joy, both in body and soul. When, indeed, the soul of the believer passes out of the body by the disintegrating process of death, he enters into paradise, and earthly pain and sorrow and trouble are ended for ever: but it is not the consummation of his holy joy; for his body lies in the grave, and is for a season the prey of a mighty corruption. But the consummation shall be in the day of the resurrection, when death shall be destroyed, swallowed

up in victory, and life and immortality be the heritage of body and soul. That will be the consummation of sanctified joy, and the impartation of a dignified glory, which shall endure for ever. This is that which the Apostle Paul calls the manifestation of the sons of God. This is that to which the Apostle John refers, when he says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear," (that is, it has not yet been made manifest,) "what we shall be, but we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

It will be the resurrection of the dead in Christ. It will be the manifestation of the sons of God. It will be the second step in the grand work of restoration instituted and ordained of God.







## CHAPTER VII.

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Restoration : Third Step—The Jewish Nation in prominent distinctiveness—The case of the Ten Tribes—Nature and Position of the redeemed sanctified Church of the Lord Jesus Christ—The Nations of the Earth—Their present Degraded Condition—Missionary efforts—Bright and splendid prospects before them—Millennium—Satan bound—Loosed for a season—The bright glory momentarily clouded—The utter Destruction of Satan's Power and Kingdom, and his Perpetual Imprisonment.

**T**HE first step in the restoration of our disordered creation occupies a protracted duration. It extends over ages and generations ; how many, it is impossible to declare, until the time of the conclusion. The second step is in marked contrast to the first. It is grand, glorious, wonderful, replete with sublime interest, and all but instantaneous. Peradventure, we are warranted in saying of it, it is instantaneous, or to use the expressive word of Holy Scripture, it shall be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump ; for the trumpet shall sound, even the trumpet of God, and Jesus Christ shall come in glory, and the dead shall be raised. So the second step is accomplished ; it is perfected in the manifestation of a blaze of glory ; and millions sing, Hallelujah ! Glory to God in the highest, and to the Lamb of God,

Redeemer, Saviour, mighty in power and wonderful in love.

The second step is ended, and the third cometh quickly.

That third step in the great process of renovation has special reference to the nations dwelling upon the earth—to nations, as contrasted with individuals. Then shall be the time of the nations, the time for the manifestation of grace to them, and the unfolding of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. No doubt, from the beginning, ever since the children of men began to be formed into large communities God has been dealing with the nations as such, but not in the manifestation of Gospel grace and blessing, or at most, in a very restricted and imperfect way.

There was one nation, indeed, whom God selected in ancient times from among the nations of the earth to stand in a special and peculiar relation to Him. He called them in signal grace, and redeemed them from an iron bondage in the manifestation of fearful judgments upon their cruel oppressors. He entered into close covenant with them, and put them in a position of exalted privilege, that in and through that nation His character might be exhibited in the proportion of justice and mercy; that His holy law might be made manifest, not as it is on the human heart generally, distorted by the disturbing influences of human corruption, but in its integrity and perfectness by the distinctness of special revelation; and that power and wisdom and goodness might be displayed in a marked peculiarity of eminence. That people He formed for Himself, that they might show forth His praise.

But admitting this specialty, yet as regards the past,

the most striking displays of the divine grace have been in connection with individuals, both in the Jewish nation and other nations ; with individuals whom God has prepared by holy teaching and inward sanctification, and the rough action of adversity, for the high and holy destiny which He has appointed to the sons of God and heirs of His blessed promise in Christ Jesus the Lord. The national exhibition of His grace in the fulness of wondrous display is reserved for a period yet to come, and will form the third marked step or stage in the work of the restoration of all things.

In that day, first of all, the nation whom God chose of old shall come forward into prominent manifestation, in the full and abundant out-pouring of the divine blessing.

Long time they have been in a deeply fallen condition. The light of the divine favour has been withdrawn from them. The cloud of judgment has hung over them, dark and terrible, through many centuries and multiplied generations, because of their past iniquities, because of their " manifold transgressions and their mighty sins ;" their proud and contumacious rebellion against the authority of God, their foul and scandalous idolatries ; their provocations, notwithstanding repeated expostulations, the whole exhibiting foul corruption of heart, and ungrateful forgetfulness of the divine goodness ; but chiefly has the judgment of God culminated upon them, because they knew not the time of their visitation, because they knew not, when God visited them with the brightest revelation of His mercy, and sent His only-begotten Son to save them, declaring Him manifestly to be the Son of God, by miracles of mighty

power, such as had never been wrought before, since the first days of their national life, when Moses led them forth from Egyptian bondage. And even that Moses, whom they professed to honour so highly, spake of the Prophet that was to arise in the latter day like to him, but greater than he ; yet, when He came—that Prophet—and wrought wonders before them in the mighty power of God, they refused Him, and would not acknowledge His mission. Even the magicians of Egypt bowed before the power of God in Moses ; they said, This is the finger of God, and they contended no more ; but when the Lord Jesus, with the finger of God, cast out devils, in the obstinacy and blasphemy of their hearts, they denied the power of God, and said, It is the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. So they rejected the Son of God, refused His teaching, denied Him before Pontius Pilate, and crucified Him, madly invoking judgment ; for they said, “ His blood be upon us, and on our children.” Therefore, God sent judgment on them and on their children ; therefore, He hid His face from them, and sent a sword against them, and gave their holy city and their beautiful temple into the hands of their enemies, and expatriated them from the land of their fathers, and scattered them among the nations of the earth unto this day.

Yet, as the apostle teaches, God has not cast them off for ever. He has not withdrawn from them for ever His loving-kindness. As the prophet of the Lord hath testified : “ He that scattered Israel will gather him ;” and they shall be brought into their own land, aye, even from the ends of the earth.

The prophecies in Scripture concerning this matter

are so many and varied, and oft-repeated, and there is so much of circumstantial detail in some of them, that it would be difficult even for refined ingenuity to explain them away, or refer them, as has been done too much, to the Christian Church. The cumulative evidence of those repeated prophecies is immense.

Moses, in the very beginning of the national life of Israel, foretells their apostacy from God, their expatriation for a season from their own land, and then their restoration to it. Touching the latter, he says, "Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it, and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." But can this refer to the return from the Babylonian Captivity? No; for with it is connected a promise of a change of heart, as he writes in continuation of the prophecy: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." The two prophecies synchronize, as also they do in the thirty-sixth chapter of the prophecies of Ezekiel; but the latter has not been fulfilled; for if it had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; therefore, neither has the former, but it points to a time which is yet future.

Passing over a multitude of similar predictions in the Old Testament Scripture, and fixing our attention

on a remarkable conversation which passed between the disciples and the Saviour, just before His ascension into heaven, we shall perceive that it points most certainly to the same conclusion. The disciples asked the question of Christ—"Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" It is quite evident that they had no doubt whatever that such was the purpose of God; they are only doubtful as to the time. It is equally evident by the Saviour's answer, that He acknowledged the correctness of their judgment as to the matter of the ultimate restoration, for He declines to answer their question concerning the time, manifestly implying that the restoration was certain, but the time uncertain, because it could not be revealed to them consistently with the purposes of the Father.

The Apostle Paul also, in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, very strongly intimates the restoration of the Jews, thereby virtually endorsing all the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures. Having stated in the beginning of the chapter that God had not cast away His people which He foreknew, he says at verse fifteen, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" So, then, they shall be received back again by divine mercy, and according to the divine purpose. Further, he writes in verses twenty-five and twenty-six, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved." He says all Israel shall be saved. What does he mean? Is it not all Israel as a nation? With regard to the work of individual conversion among the Jews, it is going on now, as it

was also in the days of the Apostle. But here he is evidently referring to the nation which, cast off for a season, shall then be received back as a nation, and participate in God's salvation. There is not indeed a notice here of territorial restoration; but if they are received back by God in national capacity, we cannot doubt that they will possess the land of their fathers according to the prediction of Moses.

Now there is a strong corroborative evidence of the truth of these prophecies, and of the correctness of the literal interpretation of them, when we observe that they entirely coincide with a state of things which is before the eyes of all men at this very time.

For it is a great fact, which cannot be ignored, that the Jews exist as a separate people to this very day, after a dispersion extending over a range of duration of eighteen hundred years; among the nations, and yet not of the nations; a nation in themselves. Who has preserved them in their integrity, that they have not been destroyed? Who has kept them in separation, that they have not been fused among other people, through the storms and tempests of centuries, and fiery persecutions against them? Is it not God?—His almighty power? He has crushed them, but He has not destroyed them. He has bruised them, but still preserved them. Wherefore? Is it not that He may have compassion on them according to the multitude of His mercies; that He may verify the word written by the Prophet Isaiah—"For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on

thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." In the appointed season it shall be fulfilled, and all the varied prophecies which declare with one voice the restoration of Israel to the land which God gave to their fathers for an everlasting possession. They shall return, under the guiding hand of the Lord their God, with weeping and supplication ; but their mourning shall be turned into joy, by the manifestation in glory of their long-rejected Messiah. In that day they shall not reject Him. They shall meet Him with acclamations of joy. They shall cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." "Lo this is our God : we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord : we have waited for Him ; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

It may be a startling thing to the prejudices of some, that the Jews as a nation should be converted by the personal appearance of the Lord Christ. It is so entirely contrary to the state of things which is now ; where conversion is a thing of faith and not of sight ; where the life which we now live as Christians is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us, as also the Apostle says in his Second Epistle to the Church at Corinth—"We walk by faith, and not by sight." That condition of things, however, is concluded at the coming of the Lord Jesus, and another manifestation of the Christian dispensation appears ; and so, whereas now the Church of God in Christ, as regards its individual members, is gathered by the preaching of the word, the Jews then as a nation, after a discipline of prolonged judgment, are converted by the personal revelation of Christ. And



why should it be thought to be even doubtful? Is there not somewhat of a parallel case in the conviction produced in the mind of Thomas, even to the removing of all his scruples, by the personal manifestation of Jesus to him? And stronger still, it was by an immediate revelation of Christ in glory that the Apostle Paul was converted. A fierce opposer of the Christian religion, like the majority of his countrymen, though like them zealous for God, but not according to knowledge, he was on a mission of persecution against the saints of God, when lo! he was suddenly converted by the appearance of Christ Himself. That which has been, may be again. That which was done to an individual may be repeated in the case of a nation; and, as in the case of Paul, opposition was quelled in a moment, so in the case of the nation, their opposition, prolonged through many generations, shall be instantaneously subdued. They shall see and believe. They shall believe, and cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

In that day the whole nation shall be gathered, and stand within the borders of the Holy Land. Judah and Israel in national union, a union never to be broken again by proud passion and unrighteous oppression. As the sticks were joined symbolically in the hand of the prophet Ezekiel, so shall the tribes be joined, never to be disassociated.

Indeed there is strong reason for believing that such a union was effected, even long before the days of the Gospel dispensation, and that, therefore, the Jews that are now scattered abroad among the nations represent the whole community of Israel. A vain inquiry has been made concerning what are called the lost ten tribes.

But who has asked the question, Have they been lost, and not found? If they exist in the earth at this day in their separation, why have they not been found? Has not every part of the earth been ransacked by the adventurous spirit of man? The prophecy written in Hosea concerning the dispersion of Ephraim, who represents the kingdom of Israel in its distinctiveness, is very remarkably fulfilled in the case of the Jews, as existing now—"My God will cast them away because they did not hearken unto Him, and they shall be wanderers among the nations." If the ten tribes exist in some distinct locality in the earth, the prophecy would be inapplicable, but it is strictly applicable to the Jews who have been for centuries wandering among the nations; and this is sufficient to establish a very strong probability that all the tribes are joined in one mingled community.

With regard to the Babylonian Captivity, there is good ground for believing that the number carried away, from time to time, out of the Holy Land was, relatively to the population of the country, not very large. It has been asserted that Sennacherib, when he took the fenced cities of Judah, carried away two hundred thousand captives; this, however, is not confirmed by anything recorded in Scripture. The definite numbers mentioned in the Bible are fourteen thousand and six hundred, carried out of Judah at different periods. No numbers are stated in connection with the ten tribes, but probably they did not exceed two or three hundred thousand; so that the whole of those deported out of Judah and Israel may be estimated at less than half a million, and it is not improbable that they were con-

siderably less ; most likely they represented the *elite* of the nation ; and we know certainly that all the skilled artificers were among the captives ; but still the relative proportion of those carried to Assyria and Babylon was but small in comparison of the bulk of the nation. No doubt both Judah and Ephraim increased greatly during the period of the captivity, for this was the command of God to them of the captivity, by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, "Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters, that ye may be increased there, and not diminished ;" so that when permission was given to return, many more went back than had originally gone forth ; and it is highly probable that some of every tribe went back, thus representing the whole nation blended in a union which was never again to be broken. The very fact, that it is said of the prophetess Anna, who lived at the birth of Christ, that she was of the tribe of Asher is sufficient to show that other tribes returned beside that of Judah, and that the distinct clanship of the tribes was then known and preserved. And other sufficient proof might be adduced beside this ; so that on the whole we may reasonably conclude that some of all the tribes returned from captivity, constituting virtually the return of the nation, or, at least, that part of it which had been carried into captivity, and that the existence of the ten tribes in their national character, in some unascertained locality in the earth, is a mere myth.

But even if we should concede that a diversity of opinion may reasonably exist on this point, yet of this there can be no doubt, that the nation will be all one in

the day of Christ, and that the blessing of God will be upon them then, and that a flowing abundance of wealth and prosperity shall come to them, as the prophet has written in the Book of God, "They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat and for wine and for oil and for the young of the flock, and of the herd, and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all."

Then—then it shall be—when the Lord shall have thoroughly purified His people by "the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning," taking away their iniquity, making them holy in heart, and causing them to walk in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Then shall be brought to pass, in all the majesty of its fulfilment, that grand prophecy recorded in the second chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, wherein it is written, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

In this prophecy, which is also repeated in the Book of the Prophet Micah, it is distinctly stated that many nations shall go to Jerusalem seeking after the Lord, probably in a way in which they never sought Him before, in the firm conviction, that, in the knowledge of

Him, and obedience to His holy laws, lies their real interest; and yet before this, we gather from Holy Scripture, that there shall be a terrible outpouring of wrath at the coming of the Lord Jesus upon the ungodly nations of Christendom, who professing to believe in Him, have denied His holy doctrine, set at nought His commandments, and not unfrequently persecuted the true servants of God. For so it is written in the word of the New Testament Scripture—"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with the angels of His power, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." This evidently has reference to such as have had an opportunity of knowing the Gospel. They heard the word of it, but would not obey it; therefore, their day of grace passed, they are visited with condign judgment. And this is that which is referred to by our Lord in the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel by St. Matthew, where He represents Himself as sitting on the throne of His glory, and before Him are gathered all nations, and they are judged in reference to their relationship and deportment towards Him. While some, even His faithful servants, are gathered into the kingdom, and exalted into His glory, the rest are consigned to everlasting punishment.

But as in the days of the glorious reign of Solomon, when first he sat upon the throne of his kingdom, he cut off his enemies, and the enemies of his authority, with the righteous judgment of God, and then inaugurated that brilliant reign which resulted in peace and

prosperity and righteousness, and great national gladness, and which has been memorable; both as an interesting story of peace, and also, because it was a type of something still more perfect and glorious thereafter to be revealed; so the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Solomon, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, having in the day of His enthronization as the King of Israel put down all rule and authority and power, and having crushed and punished the despisers and neglecters of His holy Gospel, vindicating the righteousness and truth of God to His glory, shall then inaugurate that memorable era which is so distinctly marked in the Holy Scripture, as the lengthening out of the days of peace, and abounding blessing in the earth. Then shall many nations, by their representatives of course, be gathered to Jerusalem to inquire after God, and to learn the ways of the Lord.

There are two things which will, probably, conduce to this. The first, the startling report of the terrible judgments inflicted upon the workers of iniquity, and the despisers of the grace of God, for it cannot be, but that the record of this, conveyed far and wide, will produce a very solemn impression, and hush the stormy passions, and still the rebellious uprisings of the proudest spirits on earth. They will hear and tremble, and be amazed and awed into unresisting obedience, though this will be preliminary to something higher, holier, and nobler, even the responsive obedience of hearts touched by the power of the divine love.

The second circumstance which will lead to that earnest inquiry after God, declared by the holy prophet, will be the glory of the Lord manifested in visible

splendour at Jerusalem, the then metropolitan city of the world, "the cloud and smoke by day, the shining of the flaming fire by night," which shall be reported to the inhabitants of the world, probably by royal messengers sent forth from the Jewish nation, who shall, as the prophet Isaiah intimates, declare the glory of God among the Gentiles. It may be, that then railroad development shall subserve the purposes of the Lord, in sending forth, what the prophet calls, in another place, "swift messengers." Swiftly shall they go forth on their glorious errand; and who can say, but that the electric telegraph, also subserving the purposes of the Lord, shall send precursor messages of the speedy coming of those holy ones? So shall they be expedited in every way upon their blessed errand—an errand of mercy, to tell of the goodness of the Lord, of His grace, of His power, of His illustrious salvation, that the world may believe that God has sent Him to be the King, in universal supremacy, of the whole earth.

And it shall not be then, as it is now, when thousands hear, and tens of thousands, but there is no response of faith, no ready surrender of a loving heart, no spirit of holy obedience, that says, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? but then the nations shall hear and believe and obey. Then, as the queen of Sheba in ancient times, went with all her royal train to Jerusalem to see King Solomon, and to hear his wonderful wisdom, and to admire his marvellous treasures; and when she came, she was overwhelmed with inexpressible astonishment; so shall the kings of the earth, and the mightiest potentates of the nations, crowd the royal road that leads to Jerusalem; that they may see with their eyes, and hear

with their ears ; that they may see the King in His beauty ; that they may hear His words of holy wisdom ; that they may hearken to His righteous commandments ; that they may adore Him for His infinite greatness, and His transcendental glory ; and so the report shall be confirmed among the nations, and there shall be poured upon them a spirit of universal submission and obedience ; and they shall adore and praise and magnify continually the Lord of hosts, and His glory manifested in the face of Jesus Christ. Shall they not say in those days, " Surely, our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein is no profit ? " Therefore, they shall cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, and they shall worship the King, the Lord that made the heaven, God that created the earth and the things that are therein, God manifest in the flesh, reigning in the Shechinah of visible glory at Jerusalem.

So quick and rapid shall be the transition from darkness to light, from sin to righteousness, from ignorance to knowledge, that a nation shall be born in a day ; for the Spirit of God shall go forth, and they who were dead in sin shall be alive to God. Then shall be fulfilled the manifold Scriptures of the prophets which speak of these things ; one that says, " From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles ; and in every place incense shall be offered to me, and a pure offering ; " and another that says, " The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea ; " another also, which testifies, " All the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." This



last word of testimony is specially memorable and worthy of notice, as standing in its context in connection with the holy work of Christ. It occurs in the twenty-second Psalm, which declares, in the word of prophecy, the sufferings of the Lord for the redemption of mankind. The first part of the Psalm speaks of these, and the last part declares the glory that shall follow. What is that glory? Not only that "a seed shall serve Him;" that "it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation;" that is, a generation of the righteous; but also, that "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."

What a marvellous contrast will be presented in all this, to what we see at present. The nations of the earth, in a condition of deplorable degradation, without God, without Christ, without the light of the Gospel, without any clearly-defined hope beyond the grave. Ages ago their painful defection from everything good and holy was sketched by the pencil of inspiration. They are described by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, as "filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." As it was then, so it is now. The records of missionaries unfold a state of superstition, depravity, cruelty, insensibility to goodness, which makes the heart shudder and cry out alas! for the evil.

Have Christian people expected great things from missionary exertions, from the preaching of that Gospel which, bringing salvation, has been manifested alike to Jews and Gentiles? Have they been disappointed? And yet in one sense great things have been done—great things to cause joy in the Christian, and to evoke songs of praise to the God of all grace. His word has not been preached in vain. It has not returned to Him void. It has accomplished that which He pleased. It has prospered in the thing whereto He sent it. Thousands and tens of thousands have been turned from darkness to light, and, renouncing idolatry and the nameless abominations of heathen depravity, they have embraced the Gospel with all their hearts, have exercised themselves to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man, and have adorned the holy doctrine of God their Saviour. Yes; in one sense great things have been effected, but in another aspect, how little!

If we compare what has been done with what has not been done, we must acknowledge that it is a day of small things; souls converted by thousands, and hundreds of millions fast bound in chains of darkness under the oppressive dominion of the prince of the power of the air! Oh! how little has been done in this comparison! Are the hearts of Christians cast down? Yet why should they be so? Have they been looking for the abundance of harvest in the incipient springtime? looking for something out of its time? looking now for the manifestation of that which belongs to a future era? This is not the time of the nations. That shall be hereafter, even after the coming of Christ, and the restoration of Israel. Then it shall be. The ends of the

earth shall then be converted. The gods of the earth shall then adore Him, the true God. The kings of the Gentiles shall then magnify the King of righteousness, and wield their sceptres in subordination to His royal Fiat, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Yet when the Scripture speaks of the ends of the earth being converted, and righteousness covering the earth as the waters cover the sea, it probably does not intend by this, that the righteousness shall be so universal that every soul of man shall be truly converted to God; on the contrary, it is highly probable, if indeed it be not certain, from circumstances which we shall have occasion shortly to notice, that it will co-exist with more or less of transgression; but this we have reason to believe, that to the same extent to which unrighteousness now exists, or even to a far greater extent, shall righteousness then prevail, that it shall be both approved of and practised by the masses of mankind, and that no idolatry shall have place in the earth; but the worship of the living and true God shall universally prevail, and the outward homage of all, and the inward homage of the hearts of very many, shall be rendered to Him, for in those days the great deceiver of mankind shall be restrained from evil activity in the earth, as it is written in the Book of Revelation, "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." Then there

shall be rest to the earth, when the proud and cruel oppressor of mankind is imprisoned, and the illustrious Deliverer of our race reigns over all flesh. Then righteousness and truth shall flourish in the earth, holy virtue and every sentiment of love.

With regard to the time during which this reign of virtue and righteousness shall be prolonged, though it is designated by the definite number of a thousand years, yet, occurring as that number does in the mystical Book of Revelation, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine, with any approximation to certainty, whether it is to be taken as a definite and fixed number, or symbolical, as significant of a very protracted period of duration. But whether it be literally a thousand years, or ten times or a hundred times a thousand years, during the whole period of it righteousness will prevail and flourish in the earth, and not only so, but that which is a consequence of righteousness—the abundance of peace and blessing, calling forth perpetual songs of praise from the ends of the earth.

The reign of Solomon, in reference to which he said, “The Lord hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent,” was but a faint type of this glorious millennial tranquillity, in which the millions of the earth, as the thousands of Judah in the day of Solomon, shall eat, drink, and make merry. How excellent, blessed, and most precious that reign of peace! What has the earth been from the beginning but the theatre of bloody strife and desolating war? Many evils there are in the world, very terrible; but if there be one more fearful to contemplate than another, and more terrible in its

disastrous issue, it is war—blood-thirsty, devastating, insatiable war—with its iron tramp and its banner of death, and its fierce tumult of tempestuous passion sweeping over the fair earth, spoiling the beautiful field, marring the pride of the cities of men, destroying the choicest memorials of art, leaving behind it the tears of the orphan, and the wail of the widow, and the lamentation of the disconsolate; leaving behind the burning homesteads, and the blasted harvest, and the blighted hopes of the disappointed and afflicted husbandman. What millions have been immolated on its sanguinary altar, and millions, denuded of the objects of their hearts' fondest love, have been left to take their lonely path, uncheered by the kindly voice of friendship, through the wilderness of a desolate world! But in that glorious season war shall be no more, for "He shall judge among the nations," (He—that is, the Prince of peace,) "and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." How great that blessedness! Then shall be the brotherhood of nations. If there be emulation then, it shall be sanctified emulation, for good, and not for evil. Surrounded as we now are by every element of evil—falsehood, deceit, strife, tumult, sedition, and oftentimes bloody wars—it is very hard indeed to realize a condition of things upon the earth, when all these manifestations and consequences of sin shall be exchanged for truth, and righteousness, and love. But so it shall be, when "the Beloved of the Lord," the true Jedidiah, shall reign on the earth.

Then shall they cry in the exuberant gladness of their hearts, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be His glorious Name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, Amen."

The God of Israel. Even in that day they shall call Him the God of Israel; for Israel, as has been said, shall be pre-eminent among the nations. God appointed it so from the beginning. The benignant promise of blessing to them was—"The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in His ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. . . . The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath." If this blessing, and promise of prolonged blessing, has been in abeyance for a season, yea, for a protracted season, it is only because of the iniquity of the nation, for the Lord hath chastened them that He might cast them down, but only that they might come up again into greater dignity, more exalted glory, and marvellous pre-eminence.

It may seem strange, and probably does appear incredible, to those who regard the dealings of God with men merely according to sense, and not by the apprehension of faith, that a people occupying in times past a very

small portion of the earth, not larger in geographical extent, than the principality of Wales, or taking into account the land of Gilead, not much larger, and looking forward to the re-possession of the same, should yet be regarded as pre-eminent among the families of the earth. One may say, What were the Jews in comparison of the mighty nations of antiquity, of whom such illustrious things are written in the page of history, and whose memorials have been transmitted to posterity in monuments of marvellous architecture, inimitable sculpture, exquisite painting, and the ceramic productions of art, all proclaiming distinguished genius, advanced skill, and persevering industry? And not only this, but they have left behind them precious treasures of splendid oratory and refined poetry, and everything that gives indication of most cultivated taste and highly-developed civilization. Where among the Jews shall we find such as Homer and Demosthenes, Sappho and Pindar, Phidias and Praxiteles, Apelles and Zeuxis? But then, on the other hand, shall it be forgotten, that there comes to man, through the Jews, what is infinitely beyond the highest gifts of intellect, the rarest specimens of taste, the most beautiful exhibitions of skill? "Salvation is of the Jews"—that transcendental gift, without which, the life of man is altogether vanity? It is through the Jews we possess that undying record of eternal life, which is the wisdom of God written in the language of man. They have been the means of communicating to mankind, and not merely as a passive instrument, but with intelligent conception and intention, a treasure which excels the combined art treasures of all other nations. The oracles of God, written by them in the inspiration

of heaven, were also committed to them. By them they have been transmitted to us. The treasures of the nations, though they have survived, many of them, the waste of ages, and preserved much of their beauty comparatively untarnished, yet the elements of decay, which appertain to all earthly things, are in them. They shall pass away. Many have already disappeared, and all shall ultimately. They shall pass away like those from whom the earth has inherited them. But the Word of God liveth and abideth for ever. And God has dealt with Israel in times past, as with no other nation under the whole heaven; as Moses testifies in his splendid appeal to the nation to excite their love and gratitude to God their Creator: "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard and live, or hath God assayed to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation by temptation, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?" The Psalmist also has written: "He sheweth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and judgments unto Israel, He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for His judgments they have not known them."

God has not indeed conferred all gifts upon Israel; for it is His will that His gifts should be distributed among His creatures. Even the lower animals in creation have gifts beautiful and admirable, which have not been assigned to man—to proud, dignified, intellectual man: and thus many of the nations of the earth had gifts assigned to them, beautiful and splendid and



attractive, and commanding the admiration of ages, which did not appertain to Israel: but upon Israel He has bestowed the highest, the noblest, the most imperishable—gifts that come, not merely of natural dotation, but by the inspiration of heaven. For, not alone have the Scriptures been transmitted to us from them as a gift imparted to them by God, but they were honoured of Him to be the instruments of writing those Holy Scriptures; and in doing that, they have not only set forth the saving truth of God profitable for man's eternal happiness, but they have exhibited, both in the Old and New Testament, splendid imagery of thought, sublimity of diction, impassioned poetry—unsurpassed, yea, never equalled in any human writings. What marvellous honour and dignity and glory has the Almighty given to them! What, though the nations of the earth, in power and pride, have for a season trodden under foot their beautiful heritage, and spoiled their goodly land, which once bloomed as the garden of the Lord, by the permissive judgment of God, because His people Israel sinned against Him presumptuously, ungratefully, yet shall they rise again into most distinguished eminence, and the nations of the earth in that day shall serve them; not, indeed, at least not all of them, with that coercion which is the seal of slavery, but with that willing devotion which is the truest sign of love—with their wealth, with their intellect, with the manifold gifts God has bestowed upon them, with all these, they shall serve the Israel of God.

For, as a king possessing great power and authority, and splendid affluence of wealth, and enthroned in indisputable sovereignty, can command the resources of all

nations, as did Solomon of old the skill of the Tyrians, for his own purposes, and gather around him the highest intellects of earth, and enlist in his service the noblest gifts of others, as music and painting and sculpture, and other, the beautiful and attractive gifts of the sons of men ; so shall Israel, proudly eminent in the latter day, gather the tributary wealth of the nations, and claim the service of the universal world as the metropolitan nation of the earth. Do any still demur and doubt the truth of this ? But what ! does not man, by the power of his intellect, control the whole brute creation ; even those animals that are immensely superior to him in bodily strength, and use their physical energies for his own advantage ? Does not one master-mind often sway the minds and intellects and passions of millions, and direct them to the accomplishment of one great purpose which he has set before him ? Why then may not the Jewish nation, occupying a country small in geographical extent, nevertheless, by the power of intellect and wisdom, as a king among the nations exercise a supreme authority over them, and claim their tributary submission ?

In the days of Nebuchadnezzar, the renowned king of Babylon, God gave the ancient nations for a season into his hand, and put them under his sovereignty, by threatening punishment on those that resisted his service. Thus He spake by the Prophet Jeremiah, "I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power, and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me ; and now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar my servant ; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him ;

and all nations shall serve him ; . . . . and it shall come to pass that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword and with the famine and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand."

In like manner, in days to come, the Lord God, even the King of the nations, shall make all the families of the earth subservient to the authority and supremacy of the nation of Israel, visiting with punishment every rebellious and dissenting nation, so that the tributary wealth of the earth shall flow towards the central people, and they shall command the universal admiration of the diversified races of mankind. A beautiful passage written in the sixtieth chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah entirely confirms this. Looking on through the vista of a distant futurity, and realizing the restoration of Israel, and their transcendent glory in the light of the divine favour, thus he prophesies in the inspiration of the Holy Ghost: "Thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring into thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall

call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the holy One of Israel."

Is this the word of God—the sure testimony of prophetic inspiration? then, without any manner of doubt, Israel shall be pre-eminent over the nations of the earth; small, indeed, in its beginning, yet mighty in its latter end, coming out of bondage, and after protracted sorrow, vexation, and distress, ascending to the enthronement of highest national glory.

And yet that future national pre-eminence, so clearly defined and foretold in the Word of God, gives no warrant for the opinion entertained by some, that it is better and more honourable, even as regards the present dispensation, and the salvation connected with the holy Gospel, to be a converted Jew, than a converted Gentile, as if the former stood, because of his nationality, in a higher position than the latter. No such thing. The testimony of Scripture is perfectly clear touching this matter, the Apostle Paul having distinctly stated that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free—all features of nationality disappearing in that great body, which is sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus unto salvation with eternal glory.

Now, as the Scripture plainly shows, that human nature, though originally made lower than the angelic, has, in the person of Christ, risen above it, for He is "gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him;" so the same Scripture gives us every reason to believe that the Church of God in Christ, consisting of all who have believed in Him in time past in the old

covenant dispensation, as well as in the new, or shall hereafter believe in Him, under the power of the preached Gospel, till the day of His appearing, and of whom it is said, "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," shall stand in corporate capacity, in the very highest position before God; and no nation hereafter enlightened by God, and affected by His gracious visitation, can at all stand in comparison with it, the *élite* of the human family in the most advanced meaning of the word. It is only when we compare nation with nation that it can be affirmed that Israel is the first of all. But Israel, as a nation, attains not to the lofty pre-eminence of the Church of God, chosen of the Father, redeemed by the Son, sanctified by the Spirit, brought into immediate nearness with Jehovah, counted worthy to stand in His presence in the bright blaze of His glory, and the fulness of joy, admired and beloved by the angels of God, kings and priests for ever reigning and ministering before God, uttering the praises of the Eternal and of the Lamb with the music of the heart, and with the music of the voice in its highest pitch of power and perfection of harmony.

That general assembly and church of the first-born, in which the triune God shall be glorified, and pre-eminently glorified—that great body shall be perfected in all its members at the coming of Christ; nor is there any reason to believe that those who shall be saved in the days of millennial blessedness will form part of it, but rather occupy a subordinate position; for it is distinctly said in Scripture, that the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it, (*i. e.*,

of the Church, the new Jerusalem,) not of it, but walking in the light of it, admiring and rejoicing in it.

With this reservation, however, it may be affirmed certainly of Israel, as a nation, that it is the first. But all the nations shall participate in the blessing of God through protracted years of joy and love and friendship; and so bright and so beautiful shall everything appear in those days of millennial glory—so calm, so settled, so full of the spirit of love and friendship and brotherhood, that it might seem as if there could be disturbance never again—never again anything to interrupt that reign of peace and love and joy; and yet it shall be disturbed and broken. Peace shall be interrupted, the spirit of love quenched, and hatred strife and violence re-appear for a season.

As in the natural world, when settled weather in the summer season has filled the face of nature with beauty and peace and gladness, and the skies are bright, and the sun is brilliant, and the waters sparkle in the light of heaven, and flowers bloom in their endless variety of loveliness, and the birds sing in softest melody, and all creation, irradiated, laughs in the animation of joy, it seems as if the fair beauty of the picture would be perpetuated indefinitely; but behold a cloud rises in the west, the breeze freshens, the heavens are darkened, fresher and fresher the wind blows, stronger and stronger till it assumes the character of a storm, and the rain descends, and the flood rises, and the flowers are strewn on the earth, and all their beauty perishes, and there is darkness and discomfort and sadness where all was bright before. Even so it shall be at the winding-up of that blessed millennial era.

The Scripture declares, that at the end of the thousand years Satan must be loosed a little season ; and the effect of his liberation is immediately apparent. He goeth out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, as they are described—probably symbolical names—to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea ; and they go up on the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints round about, and the beloved city. That Satan should deceive where opportunity is given, is only what might be naturally expected from his character. A liar from the beginning, and the father of lies, when he deceives, he only exhibits himself as he is. His imprisonment, though it restrained the evil manifestation of his power, altered not his character ; and therefore he comes forth with the same exhibition of the deceivableness of unrighteousness. But the fact, that the nations are deceived by Satan, fully confirms what has been already intimated, namely—that the conversion of the nations in the millennium is not of such a nature that every individual is really brought in heart under the influence of the divine grace. Many may be so affected, very many ; but multitudes remain only externally religious, acknowledging God, acknowledging the Son of God, walking generally in the outward observances of the law and the statutes and commandments made known to them, but their hearts all the time not radically affected, and filled with that love of God which makes obedience willing, and earnest, and joyous, and perfect. They resemble the house spoken of in one of our Lord's parables—empty, swept, and garnished ; and therefore,

when the deceiver goeth forth, they are corrupted, and then the true state of their hearts is made manifest.

The consequence resulting from the loosing of Satan, and his power acting upon the unregenerate heart, is just as natural as the desolation and wreck which follows a raging tempest—just as natural as the widely-spread devastation, which is manifest upon the action of a mighty and consuming fire. The whole character of the transaction assumes the aspect of a mighty conspiracy against the authority of the Son of God, and the saints that live in union and communion with Him.

Does it appear strange that such a thing should be attempted in the presence of Him, and against His supremacy, who worketh in that mighty power which is able to subdue all things to Himself? and yet scarcely more strange, if at all so, than that the thousands of Israel gathered in the wilderness of Sinai should make a golden calf, and perpetrate a flagrant act of idolatry before the very mountain that was crowded with the symbols of the Divine Majesty; scarcely more strange, than that Satan should convulse, with a spasm of agony, the body of his victim in the presence of the Holy One, clothed with power for his expulsion, and after He had commanded him to go forth from the sufferer. That he should assail the Son of God in glory, only a little more wonderful, than that he should assail Him with strong temptation in the wilderness after he had heard the unmistakable testimony from heaven—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." That he should go forth in those days to work mischief in the earth, to darken the minds of men with the shadows of hell, and stir them up to strife and tumult and sedition,



which can end in nothing but ruin and defeat to him and to the deceived who follow him and act in his interest, only a little more wonderful than that he should work such mighty mischief now, create incalculable disorder, misery, and confusion, when he knows that the Son of Man, who is also the Son of God, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and that all power is given to Him in heaven and earth. But what he is permitted to do, that he will do to the end of time, and to the last limit of his power. To do mischief, to work ruin, to destroy order, to bring to utter destruction the bodies and the souls of men, that is his aim, his ceaseless endeavour, his malignant purpose, for which he is ever working by day and by night.

But do any ask why does God permit the violent action of Satan again after such an era of blessedness, and after the earth has been so long released from the incubus of his malignant presence? To this enquiry the Scripture gives no reply. It says of Satan, that he must be, after his imprisonment, loosed for a short time. But it assigns not the reason. Of course, in the silence of the Scripture, no one has a right to return a dogmatical answer, yet this may be said, that the universal peace and general manifestation of righteousness prevailing in the earth during the period of his incarceration, and then the terrible outbreak of wickedness, disorder, violence, and war, which follow immediately on his release, show manifestly—and this may be one reason, at least, for his temporary release—that the abominable evil that is in the earth is mainly due to the presence of Satan; for although there is a corrupt nature in man, in every man, by reason of the primeval

transgression, yet the evil acting of it would be immensely corrected by good laws, and by the firm and just administration of them ; by wholesome education in the ways of virtue ; by the presence of the children of God in the earth, and their good and wholesome examples, if it were not for the presence of Satan. He could indeed do little if there were not a corrupt nature in man ; but as fire is inflamed to intensity of action by a strong draught of air, so the spirit of the evil one, acting upon the corruption of human nature, develops it into an intensity of evil, filling the world with violence, and aggravating every human sorrow.

By the loosing of Satan, and his permitted return to earth, the progress of the human race towards perfection seems to be interrupted, only however for a short season. Evidently, it is not the purpose of God, that that prolonged reign of righteousness, peace and blessing should be perpetuated without interruption, as if it were the final winding-up of all that God intended to do in the way of restoration. But as there is a manifestation of wisdom and goodness in every successive step taken by God in the restoration of all things ; so in this God may have intended to show the perfection of human government in reference to the nations of the earth, while yet in the flesh, and the inestimable benefits that will result, even in an imperfect state of things, from government being administered and carried on in every department of it under the superintendence, guidance, and control of One possessed of power, wisdom, and goodness in perfection ; a thing only then exhibited, when Jesus Christ, as the plenipotentiary of God, the second Adam, invested with sovereign dominion over all flesh, sways

the sceptre of earth, the one controlling autocrat, to whom all the kings of the earth shall render unresisting obedience.

In tracing back the history of the world, it is ever found, that the kingdoms of the earth have prospered most when ruled by those who were distinguished by wisdom, power, and goodness: just in proportion as these remarkable virtues flourished in the ruler, in the same proportion the kingdom flourished also; and this is applicable both to Jewish history and to profane. With the imbecility and vice of the monarch, the kingdom always languished; but in the energy and virtue of its ruler, it rose in prosperity and strength; for it is true, not only that the throne is established by righteousness, as Solomon has written, but the prosperity of the kingdom advanced also. But as it would be in vain, in retracing the history of man, to look for one in whom human nature existed in perfection, so among the kings of the earth, it were vain to search for one in whom all kingly qualities and capabilities were found without deteriorating, disturbing influences. Such a one is only found when the Son of God appears in the perfection of manhood, and the exaltation of His kingly power, to reign on the earth, and over the earth. And kingdoms rise and fall, and the mightiest monarchs of the earth perish, and the most established dynasties disappear; the thrones are overturned, overturned, overturned, till He comes, whose right it is to reign, to whom the Father hath given all the nations, that He should reign over them and administer judgment and justice in the unswerving rectitude of God, as writes the Prophet Daniel, when he saw these marvellous futurities in the visions of

God : " There was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him ; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

The character of a true king, fulfilling all that is involved in that most distinguished office, was sketched long ago by the royal Psalmist of Israel, when he wrote in the wisdom of God, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, " The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me ; he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God, and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds : as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." How perfect the description and exquisitely beautiful the illustration ! but though there have been approximate verifications of such a description among ancient and modern kings, yet the perfect verification has not been yet, and shall not be, until it shall be seen in Christ. He is that perfect King whom God the Father approves, that perfect King under whose beneficent rule unexampled blessings shall abound in the earth, typically exhibited in the days of Solomon, to be gloriously fulfilled in the reign of Christ ; for thus it is written in the Psalm, entitled a Psalm for Solomon, howbeit a greater than Solomon is there : " He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness ; He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor . . .

In His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth . . . His Name shall endure for ever : His Name shall be continued as long as the sun ; and men shall be blessed in Him : all nations shall call Him blessed."

But when that millennial era shall have fulfilled the purpose for which it was ordained, it shall be concluded. As the Law passed away, and the dispensation thereof was concluded, when the end for which it had been instituted of God had been accomplished, so that grand and glorious era, when it has taught its sublime and beautiful lessons to men and angels, when it has made manifest virtue and truth and love, under the clement reign of the most illustrious of monarchs, shall also pass away, that something still better may be brought in, even the finality of restoration, according to the purpose of God.

But before that finality of restoration be accomplished, there must be, according to what has been already stated, a terrible tempest and disturbance in the earth by the loosing of Satan, and the working of his mighty power in fierce hostility to the goodness of God, and the best interests of men : yet that disturbance, the last, though very severe, will be, as the Scripture seems to intimate, but of short duration, violent as the tornado of tropical climes, producing terrible mischief, but terminating after a brief space. It shall be the last tempestuous outbreak of sin, the last manifestation of the dreadful power of Satan, bringing swift destruction, not only on his misguided followers, but on himself also. They compass, even that mighty army of proud, rebellious, conspirators, they compass about the camp of the saints, and the

beloved city. The momentary power granted to them inspires them, probably, with the vain hope, that they can accomplish their evil purpose against those who are in the safe-keeping of God, whose place of defence is stronger than the munition of rocks; for it is the arm of God, and of the Son of God. Can they prevail, that ungodly throng, though their number is as the sand of the sea? Moses said of old to the terrified children of Israel, when the embattled hosts of Egypt thundered in their rear, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." And so the Lord did. He overthrew their enemies with a terrible destruction. He saved His people with a great salvation. And so He will do in the day of Satan's last desperate battle. Only His people, trusting in Him, shall have no fear. They shall not be terrified like Israel in the day of Egypt's pursuit. They shall know the arm that succoured them in past days of conflict. They shall know, and have full confidence in the power of Him with whom so long, through a protracted age of blessedness, they have reigned in triumph and glory. So they shall trust with serenest confidence, and they shall not trust in vain. The Scripture says, "Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them;" that is, the enemies. Thus they perish with a terrible destruction, instantaneous as the ruin that came upon the hosts of Pharaoh; instantaneous as the annihilation of Sennacherib's power, when the angel of the Lord smote one hundred and eighty thousand Assyrians in the camp

of the proud king. And destruction falls not only on them, but now, at last, on the wicked deceiver who lured them on to their ruin. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are"—his own instruments of evil, moral and physical, in times gone by—"and shall be tormented for ever and ever:" no more loosing, no going out again from that place of torment, no cessation of that torment: it endureth for ever and ever. There he abideth with his mighty intellectual power undiminished, his earnest desire for mischief and confusion as strong as ever, but no possibility of his employing the former, or gratifying the latter in an activity of evil. There he abideth, and goeth not forth. It is the end of the kingdom of darkness, and of the king thereof. He appears in the first chapter of man's eventful history, a deceiver, a tempter, a destroyer. As such, he follows the footsteps of man through each succeeding generation, till the time of the end comes. Then the seed of the woman has bruised the serpent's head. He has destroyed his power for ever and ever.





## CHAPTER VIII.

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Restoration : The Last Step in the Great Process—The General Judgment—The Great Burning—The New Heavens and New Earth—The wonderful working and wisdom of God—The Grand Consummation.

**W**ITH the destruction of Satan's power, and his everlasting imprisonment in torment, the third step in the great restoring process may be considered as concluded, and the fourth and final at once begins. It begins in judgment, and issues in boundless mercy and blessing.

Judgment—the general judgment—eternal judgment as the Scripture calls it, taken in connection with its ever-enduring results, what is there more solemn in the prospective of the human family? Why is it that the minds of men, even those professing to believe in it, should be so little affected by it? For the present life of man, what is it, but a vapour? Its momentous concerns transient things of vanity. A few short years and they come to an end. Death supervenes, shutting out every object of sense from the soul, severing all its connection with this present world. Death, and after death the judgment; though not immediately after death, the general judgment; for that is a thing connected with the final winding-up of the destiny of man. Yet there are



thousands of professing Christians, tens of thousands, who practically ignore this all-important futurity, and live and act as if they had no account to render to their Creator, of things done in the flesh. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," is the creed of practical infidelity. But the voice of God is ever reminding man of judgment to come: ever it says to the young—"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Ever the holy counsel of heaven says, to all, "Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man;"—his whole duty, his whole wisdom, his whole interest, his whole happiness for time and eternity; "for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

The twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation contains the most solemn record of the eternal judgment that is to be found anywhere in the Scriptures. The holy prophet and apostle of Jesus Christ beheld in the visions of God, the vision of this great judgment, and he has written: "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." This is evidently what is called the general judgment—general as distinguishing it from all

other judgments which have been pronounced by God from time to time upon individuals and nations. This will be the judgment of universal mankind ; the human race in its complexity, as one great community in the vast empire of God.

But the whole passage is so marked by grandeur and solemnity, so full of the elements of the awful, though not without the accompaniments of mercy and consolation, and it involves such momentous interests, that it demands a thoughtful and attentive notice. Though there is figure and symbol in it, yet the solemn fact of a final and unalterable judgment, with all its most serious and affecting consequences, for good or evil, stands forth in unmistakable revelation.

The very colour of the throne carries with it the idea of unspotted purity. It is white, even as the spotless ones standing before the throne of God are represented as clothed with white robes ; even as the Church is described as clothed in fine linen, clean and white ; even as the Son of God, when transfigured in glory, appeared in garments white and glistening, so as no fuller on earth could white them.

It is a great white throne—the throne of eternal judgment, immaculate. Righteousness is the habitation of it. Unswerving impartiality is its firm foundation. It knows not respect of persons. Truth shines from it in the lustre of untarnished purity, painful to the eye of iniquity, but glorious in the eyes of all who know and love the truth.

The flight of the heaven and the earth is, no doubt, highly figurative, but as such, highly suggestive of the transcendent dignity and majesty of Him who sitteth on

the throne of judgment, of whom the Patriarch Job said in the ancient times, "The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at His reproof." In royal state He sitteth most exalted, in the solemn severity of judgment, to inquire, to hear, to receive evidence, to search motives, to weigh actions, to try the "heart and the reins" of the children of man, to pronounce judgment irrevocable on the right and on the wrong. How great is He! how glorious! how wonderful! how just! and yet merciful! and all that is splendid and impressive is gathered around Him. Thus, Daniel has written, describing the solemnity and terrible grandeur of the future judgment: "A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before Him: thousand, thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him," ministers and executioners of His righteous judgment.

But who is He that sitteth on that throne? "God, the Judge of all"—"The God of the spirits of all flesh." Is it not God? Saith not the Scripture, "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God"? Yet it is God manifest in the flesh; Jesus Christ appointed of the Father to be the Judge of the living and the dead. So it is written, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad;" and again, it is written, "He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained." And the Lord Himself said, in the days of his ministerial teaching on earth, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour *the Father.*"

The apostle, carried forward into distant futurity in the rapture of the Spirit, beheld that great white throne ; he saw also Him that sat upon it, terrible in majesty ; for creation trembles at His presence. It is the Son of Man in His glorified humanity, and the exhibition of His Almighty power. It is the Son of Man in the everlasting glory of the Father. Girt with omnipotence, invested with the unveiled splendour of the Triune God, He sitteth in majesty supreme. The destinies of the universe are suspended on His decision. Thoughts glance back through the long vista of departed ages ! This is He, who in those by-gone ages, born of a woman, was laid a helpless babe in the manger of Bethlehem. This is He, who in the days of His ministerial life on earth, had not where to lay His head. The loving Benefactor, above all others, of the race of man, yet He was despised and rejected of men—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. This is He, whom the chief priests accused, and the officers buffeted, and the soldiers insulted, and Pilate scourged, and the fierce multitude cried against Him, Away with Him, away with Him. Behold, He hung upon the accursed tree ; His temples crowned with thorns, His body bathed in blood, and they bowed the knee before Him in scornful derision, and mocked Him in the agonies of a lingering death. Did heaven look on in wonder ?—in wonder at the mighty sin of man, and in wonder at the amazing condescension of the Son of God, and the heir of all things ?

Marvellous transition from the extreme of deepest degradation to the highest exaltation of glory ! The crucified One, and He is the Lord of the universe.

The degraded malefactor, and He is the King of glory. The accused and unrighteously-condemned at the bar of an earthly tribunal, and He is the righteous Judge of heaven and earth, of men and angels. How calm and serene in the purity of holiness, that majestic brow! The light of immortality is beaming in His eye. Inflexible justice, authority that cannot be questioned, dignity that awes the spirit of the creature, and yet, withal, love that is full of tenderness, are blended marvellously in His holy aspect. Angels do Him homage. The hosts of God minister to Him. All the energies of creation are at His command. He holds the sceptre of His Father's authority. He wields the sword of His Father's justice. He grasps the thunderbolts of His Father's wrath. He is enthroned to execute the judgment written. Who shall not fear thee, thou King of saints, and righteous Judge of mankind? Who shall not fear Thee, and glorify Thy Name? "His work is perfect, all His ways are judgment, a God of truth, and without iniquity. Just and right is He!"

And the dead stand before the righteous Judge, who sitteth upon the throne. "I saw," says the holy apostle and prophet, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God," a mighty and an immense throng, the congregated millions of all generations. The Scripture has not definitely revealed the number, and who shall declare it? The dead in Christ had risen long before, even at the second coming of the Son of God. They went up to meet Him in triumph, as He came down from heaven. But the rest of the dead, as the Word of God shows, lived not, until the millennial era had passed by. But then they are summoned forth from the graves of earth,

and from the depths of the sea, and in that day the Scripture is fulfilled, which says, "All that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." They shall come forth to stand before the judgment-seat, the great white throne, and Him that sitteth thereon, the righteous Judge of heaven and earth.

Oh! what a mingled mass of Adam's race is gathered there; the meanest of mankind, and the proudest! Kings, whose names have been illustrious from ancient time, inscribed on the ever-expanding roll of human history: warriors, who won the applause of nations, and commanded their homage by the triumphs of victory, which the world called splendid. Oh! how the tribes of earth shouted in acclamation! They chiselled their deeds of greatness on sculptured tablets of marble. They stereotyped their fame for immortality in statues of bronze and stone! Statesmen, also, of undying celebrity, and proudly eminent in their day and generation, though not always scrupulous in the use of means to accomplish their projected ends; men of learning, men mighty in the manifestation of the wisdom of this world; orators, poets, painters; men endowed with all the diversified gifts of human genius and skill; and then the vast undistinguished throng of earth's teeming population, whose names perished in the day when their spirits passed into eternity, forgotten in the world as if they had never been, but not forgotten before God, no, not the least of them, but brought up before the judgment-seat, every one of them, and every hidden thing connected with them made manifest; every varied form of sin from the most refined, attractive, and seductive, to that which is most coarse, offensive, and abominable;

every unhallowed motive revealed in heaven's searching light ; all pride, hypocrisy, and vain glory, envy, hatred, wrath, strife, and all uncharitableness ; all theft, and covetousness, and deceit, and murder, and adultery, and impurity of thought, word, and action ; every secret thing revealed in that day, for the books shall be opened ; the book of God's omniscience, and the book of human conscience. What secret thing can be concealed from God ? There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves, that God shall not see. The darkness is no darkness with Him, but the night is as clear as the day. And what God's omniscience makes manifest, He Himself being, as the Scripture testifies, a swift witness against the unrighteous, the testimony of human conscience shall entirely respond to, and every tongue shall be silent, and every excuse shall become vanity, and all the world shall be guilty before God, and shall stand in awful expectation awaiting the sentence of the righteous judgment. And who shall plead their cause in that day—that day of terror and alarm unspeakable ? Who shall speak a word on their behalf, when even the Son of God, the merciful Saviour of mankind, shall pronounce them guilty—inexcusably guilty.

Howbeit, He shall not pronounce all guilty who stand before the great white throne. For the saints of God standing there, redeemed from among men, they are not guilty. Once they were, even as others, but they repented—once they were, but they believed on the Son of God in an acceptable time—in a day of salvation. Once they were guilty, but they shall not be guilty then. How could they ? They have washed their robes and

made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They are clean. They are justified; yea sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. Guilty? No; there is no condemnation to them. They have found acceptance in the Beloved, and they have boldness in the day of judgment. For who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is He that condemneth? And this is full of unspeakable consolation, this glorious thought, to those who have sinned, and sinned repeatedly, and sinned grievously, and sinned with excessive aggravation, that when God justifies them, no tongue can speak in condemnation of them. Therefore they shall stand with confidence in the inexpressible terribleness of that last great judgment, and they shall praise the name of the most high God, glorious in holiness, and fearful in the manifestation of His righteous judgment.

Doubts have been entertained by some, whether those who have been accepted in Christ, and raised in their bodies to an immortality of glorious blessedness, shall be present in that day among those who shall then be called to judgment. It has been said, They have been already judged, and shall they be judged again? But why not, if the holy and glorious purpose of God require it? Why not? it can do them no harm. It involves not terror to them, nor the least apprehension of condemnation. Scatheless they are, like the holy youths in Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace, on whom even the smell of fire had not passed. While it glorifies God, it cannot abate their joy, one jot or one tittle. And if they have been judged before, it was as a part of the professing Christian Church, that they might be



acknowledged as the true-hearted servants of God, and faithful followers of the Lord Jesus, in contradistinction to those who made but a barren and empty profession of faith, who, while they professed to believe on the Son of God, yet walked according to the course of this world, as those dead in trespasses and sins; but now, in this last general judgment, they appear as a part of universal mankind, that their works may be declared before the universe as approved and accepted, and that they may go forth acknowledged as the elect of God, in whom His soul delighteth, redeemed from among men, that they may be to the praise of the glory of His grace, accepted in the Beloved for evermore. They are present, therefore, in that great and solemn day of account.

-That they shall be there appears evident from the fact, that among the books that lie on that judgment-seat, is the book of life. Are not their names written in that book of life? And when the mighty roll is called, peradventure by an angel or an archangel, shall they not with alacrity respond, and in that hour, and in that place of deepest solemnity, receive the approving smile of God, their Father and Saviour, and glorify Him in the power of the life of their everlasting salvation?

The record of this last judgment, written in the book of God, naturally reminds us of the first judgment pronounced in the early history of man. There is a first judgment and a second, as there is a first death and a second. The fallen life of man begins in judgment. His final destiny is ushered in by judgment also. But there is a striking difference between the one and the other. The first judgment brought death into the world,

with an endless complication of sorrows, perpetuated individually and nationally through ages and generations, so that the whole creation has been groaning and travailing in pain ever since. The last judgment shall eliminate from the earth for evermore, all that is evil and tends to evil. Ages ago the Psalmist wrote, "Sinners shall be consumed out of the earth." However, this may have been partially verified, from time to time, in the cutting off of wicked transgressors by the stroke of the judgment of the Almighty; yet the full and complete verification of it shall not be until the time of the general judgment; for then, whosoever shall not be found written in the book life, shall be cast into the lake of fire. It shall be the final perdition of ungodly men. Then shall the Lord Almighty, in His wrath and last judgment, destroy those who destroy the earth; and their place shall be found no more at all.

The general judgment concluded, another act of God is presently accomplished—an act of transcendental magnitude and importance, and that is the burning up of the earth with the works thereof.

This is that which is so solemnly referred to by the Apostle Peter, in the third chapter of his Second General Epistle. It is described in language grand and impressive in the highest degree, yet simple, and divested of all turgid bombast. Having referred to the destruction of the earth by a flood of waters which occurred at a period of man's history, now reckoned in the date of ancient times, he adds: "The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word" (*i.e.* the word by which of old they were created) "are kept in store,

reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" . . . "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise; and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up."

Some there are who have thought, that because this is mentioned as occurring in the day of the Lord, it will take place just at the advent of the Son of God; but they seem to overlook this important truth, that the day of the Lord is an expression which embraces a protracted period of duration, and is not, by any means, to be confined to the limited duration of a day, in the literal and proper meaning of the word. For, as we say of the wicked, he has his day, meaning by that, a prolonged period of time; so, in like manner, when we speak of the day of the Lord, we mean a period indefinitely prolonged: indeed, it is a day which shall endure in endless continuity, for what day shall come after it for evermore? And in the very chapter in the Epistle of Peter here referred to, it is evident the word "day" is used in immense expansiveness of meaning, from the fact, that the apostle reminds the Christians to whom he writes, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

In nowise, therefore, does it follow, that because it is said this great conflagration will take place in the day of the Lord, it will be accomplished just at the commencement; and to such an interpretation there is the obvious objection, that if the earth were to be burned up at the beginning of the millennium, the nations would be consumed, concerning whom the Scripture affirms,

that they shall be converted to the Lord. For how could they escape? In a general conflagration of the earth, they would as certainly perish as mankind perished in the day of the flood, nor would there be any way of meeting such an objection, within the limits of the reasonable and the conceivable, except by an imaginative supposition akin to the geological fiction of the non-universality of the deluge, that only a part of the earth would be consumed by the mighty fire of God. But the Scripture gives not the least intimation of such restriction or limitation, but very plainly declares, the earth shall be burned up, and the works therein.

It may, indeed, be asked, supposing this destruction of the earth to be post-millennial, what becomes of the nations who flourished in the plenitude of blessing during the millennial era? The reply to such inquiry is not difficult. We must remember the extensive outbreak of wickedness which occurs at the end of the millennium, and the terrible consequent destruction visited upon the guilty nations, and the result of the final judgment, so that those only remain whose hearts have been converted to the Lord; and they shall be miraculously lifted out of danger as the saved of the Lord, in the day of the earth's fiery visitation, just as those who found grace in the eyes of the Lord, in the day of the mighty flood, were marvellously preserved in the ark from the universal ruin.

But what of the Jewish nation which occupied so prominent a position among the nations of the earth, and in their latter day restoration shone forth with such distinguished eclat? The Scripture is silent concerning them. For the notices of the future are brief. They

enter not into a carefully arranged detail. But we may reasonably suppose that the former order of things being concluded, and the times of the nations ended, they cease to exist in the ancient character of their nationality, and take their part among those finally and gloriously saved in the grand consummation of all things, though, as has already been intimated, not of the Church in the distinctive peculiarity of its constitution and perfection.

In what way that last consuming fire shall be produced is a matter concerning which the Scripture gives us no information. Though it declares how the deluge was effected, even by the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, and the flooding rain from heaven for the space of forty days, yet it declares not whether the fire of the last day is to burst out of the centre of the earth, or descend from the Lord out of heaven, as in the days of the ruin of Sodom and Gomorrah; possibly both—fire from beneath, and fire from above, as in the flood, water from below, and water from on high. And, perhaps, the philosophy that suggests that the centre of our earth is in a state of heat scarcely conceivable, is not altogether at fault; for it may be there in store for the fulfilment of one of the great purposes of God. But though the Scripture tells not how the fire is to be kindled, yet it declares with precision and the certain affirmation of a great future fact, that the earth, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Of old God created it by His Almighty power, arranged and furnished it by His wisdom in order and beauty, filled it with life and love and intelligence and joy, looked upon it with His divine approbation, and pronounced it very

good. And now in the latter day it is destroyed by the mighty element of fire. "The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Oh, what a day that will be!—

"Our God in grandeur, and our world on fire."

Who can conceive, even approximately, the magnitude and terrible emphasis of that great event? We have read in sacred story of the destruction of the cities of the plain, when the Lord rained fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven. A terrible spectacle that!—fiery ruin from the presence of the Almighty. And when Abraham looked forth in the early morning, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace; to which also Moses solemnly and impressively refers, describing the whole land as being brimstone, salt, and burning. We read also in sacred prophecy of the smoke of the burning of a mighty city which fills the beholders with amazement, consternation, terror, and anguish. But many cities of the children of men, in days gone by, have perished in the consuming element of fire, each a spectacle of sublime grandeur and affecting awe. Many more, doubtless, shall be so destroyed in the time to come. Records also are fresh in the memory of every one, of mountains burning in the terrible activity of internal combustion, rolling forth the raging flame, casting out floods of liquid fire, spreading, as the awful river flows along, ruin and desolation. From time to time there comes also the report of forests on fire, where the fierce flame leaps forward from tree to tree and from branch to branch, with amazing activity and swiftness, and all green grass is burned up,

and every vegetable production disappears, and the sound of the mighty Destroyer is heard afar off, and the lighting up of the heavens in the distance warns the inhabitants of the land that the fiery flood is rolling rapidly towards them, and that their safety lies in instantaneous flight.

Even of the magnitude of these we form but a very inadequate conception, unless we have seen some of them with our eyes, and heard with our ears ; but who hath seen with his eyes or heard with his ears, the sight and the sound of that last consuming fire, that he should even approximately conceive it ? Behold, it is the "stream of brimstone," kindled by the "breath of the Lord," from pole to pole, and it burneth the universal earth. The Scripture tells, that in the beginning the sons of God shouted for joy in the morning prime of creation : shall they not suspend all utterance for a season, while they behold that last great burning, in solemn and adoring wonder ? And when in the end they speak, shall it not be to magnify God for the manifestation of His righteous judgments, and the fulfilment of His eternal purposes ? Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments ; Thy counsel standeth fast ; the thoughts of Thy heart for ever, and for evermore !

"The earth . . . and the works that are therein shall be burned up : " thus hath the holy apostle testified in the Word of the Lord ? But wherefore ? Wherefore shall the Lord kindle that great burning, and destroy the work of His own hands ? It is because of sin, and unto purification. Because the earth has been polluted by the accumulated iniquities of many generations,

therefore, it shall be destroyed : in order that it may be purified from the original evil, and all the evils innumerable that have resulted from that.

By the "spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning," so it shall be purified. For although it is said, the earth shall be burned up, that does not mean that it shall be so destroyed as to be annihilated. Philosophy knows that no matter can be destroyed, any more than it can be created, except by a direct act of the Almighty. Fire cannot destroy it, nor any other operative agent in nature. And though popularly we speak of a substance being destroyed by fire, yet it is never intended to be signified thereby that it goes back into nothingness, but only that it is disintegrated, decomposed, resolved into divers elements. The earth, though it is said to have perished in the waters of the deluge, yet re-appeared as of old, with some modifications, after the waters had subsided ; even so, the earth though destroyed and disintegrated by the more powerful action of fire, shall yet re-appear ; and so the Apostle Peter, who describes that mighty burning of the earth in the end of the days, adds in the same chapter, and immediately after the prophetic revelation of the world's dissolution by fire : " Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness ;" in accordance with which statement, the Apostle John has written in the visions of the Apocalypse, " I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ;" and to which also the Prophet Isaiah refers, though somewhat more obscurely.

We may conclude, therefore, that out of the ashes



of that calcined earth, there shall rise again, by the mighty power of God, and the energy of His wonderful working, another earth, which may be called a resurrection earth, even as out of the ashes of our mortal bodies, our bodies of immortality shall be fashioned by the mighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ. A resurrection earth it shall be for the resurrection saints of God : a new earth, says the Apostle Peter, wherein dwelleth righteousness, evidently implying that it shall so have place there, that sin shall be found in it no more at all for ever. In the old earth it has been found, and dwelt in it through long ages and generations ; but in the new earth it is not, and never shall be. And in this is found another sufficient reason to assure us that that great burning of the earth shall be at the end, and not at the beginning of the millennium ; for if it were at the beginning, sin would re-appear, and the earth could not be called the dwelling-place of righteousness. It seems, however, to be the final purification of the earth, purging it from all iniquity, from all defilement, from the presence of all the workers of iniquity, that it may be meet to be the habitation of God and of His saints.

For when this shall have been done, when the present earth shall have been calcined to ashes, and the resurrection earth shall be made manifest in all the perfection of its matchless beauty, adorned with everything that is grand, and glorious, and beautiful, and desirable, then shall the great work of restoration be finally and eternally finished. In that day every trace of the primeval curse shall be obliterated—from the souls of the redeemed, for they shall have the image of their glorious

Creator and Saviour—from their bodies, for they shall be made like to the glorified body of the Son of God—from the earth, for it shall be renovated in the perfection of beauty. Then the Lord God shall behold all the hallowed, renovated work of redemption, and pronounce it very good. In that day shall be verified the holy word of prophecy which is written in the Book of the Revelation, “And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

Then shall Paradise re-appear in more than pristine beauty, where floweth not the river Euphrates, and its three fraternal streams of ancient memory, and celebrated from the beginning, but the pure river of the Water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; there also shall be the Tree of Life, to which access shall be debarred no more, the fruit of which is an immortality of ever-enduring joy. Of old, when man for his transgression was driven out of Paradise, God set Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life, that man should not then go back and eat its immortal fruit; but when he is restored to Paradise, the Cherubims and the flaming sword shall bar the entrance of every enemy, that man may live in peace, rejoice in God, abide with Christ, and in everlasting union with Him who loved our sinful race, and gave Himself for it, may for ever glorify in glory the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And thus shall the great work of restoration be finally and fully finished ; the primeval error thoroughly repaired ; the primeval ruin splendidly rebuilt ; the primeval rebellion buried in the heart of God's everlasting love.

It has been said, Not as the creation, so also is the restoration. No ; the one was rapidly developed to perfection. In six days God created the heaven and the earth, and the sea, the fish, the fowl of the air, cattle, and creeping thing, and man the head of all. The other advances gradually, slowly, and is, in our estimation, painful and distressingly prolonged, often causing the sorrowing saints of God, groaning in their earthly tabernacle, to exclaim, How long, O Lord, how long shall the wicked triumph, and trample on the earth, and multiply wounds, and bruises, and disasters, and acts of outrageous violence, while the righteous cry, out of their affliction and the anguish of their heart, longing, longing, for the salvation of God.

Yet again ; not as the creation, so is the restoration. In the beginning God arranged and beautified the earth, and replenished it with life in its manifold and varied developments and activities, ere man, the king thereof, and lord paramount, was introduced to his habitation, to his kingdom, to his paradise, and then and there he found every thing calculated to delight the eye, to ravish the ear, to satisfy the bodily and intellectual part of his nature, and to lift up his heart and understanding in joyful praise to the ever-glorious Creator of all.

But now in the restoration the process is reversed. The renovation of the earth, the material earth, is the

very last thing effected; and the kings of it, those whom God in His grace has called to be such, whom the Son of God has constituted as such, making them, as the Scripture says, kings and priests unto God, and who shall hereafter be enthroned in their high and dignified office, are prepared for their future destiny, first by a painful process of elementary training, teaching them to savour the things that are of God, not those that are of men; teaching them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; teaching them to stand fast against the terrors of persecution, and the seductive blandishments of pleasure; teaching them to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; and then by an intermediate glorification, ere they take possession of the earth in its renovated perfection, as their everlasting habitation.

The process is reversed, but there is a reason for it.

First of all, the end must needs be delayed until all that are ordained to the fruition of eternal life, and the excellent glory which God has prepared for His redeemed, shall have been born into the world, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God, through the word of the divine truth; and this it is which is intended by the Apostle Peter, when he says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" that is, all those foreknown to Him before the foundation of the world, and for whom He has prepared the holy and everlasting kingdom. In accordance with this we pray in the beautiful burial service of the Church of England and the Church of Ireland, "that God would shortly accomplish the number of His elect and hasten

His kingdom, that we, with all that have departed in the true faith of His holy Name, may have our perfect consummation of bliss both in body and soul, in His eternal and everlasting glory ;" and in praying that, we signify and declare our belief, that that consummation cannot be until the fulness of God's elect is gathered out of the masses of the ungodly world, and gathered into the Church of God by His grace and the power of the Holy Ghost.

Then, secondly, the end being delayed for the purpose just declared, an opportunity is thereby afforded for that great controversy between good and evil, which has been going on from the beginning, and shall be prolonged until the mystery of God be finished. It is a controversy of the highest moment, intimately connected with the glory of God ; with the maintenance of His truth, the vindication of His justice, the magnifying of His loving-mercy, the manifestation of His holiness, the revelation of His wisdom, the setting forth of all His illustrious attributes ; connected also inseparably with the final destiny of man for weal or woe, for everlasting joy, or ever-enduring sorrow. It is a controversy which arises necessarily from the entrance of evil into the world, where before all was good. All in the beginning was good. Now it is good and evil, and these two are contrary the one to the other ; and though they may be found co-existing in the same individual, they can no more be blended in harmonious agreement than any of the antagonistic elements existing in the world of nature. It is a controversy in which the highest intellects in the universe are engaged : the Son of God on the one hand, and the prince of the power of the air on

the other: the children of light on the one hand, the powers of darkness on the other in spiritual manifestation and activity, operating also through the instrumentality of bodily agents. It is a controversy which has fixed the gaze of angels, and we may well believe they watch with most intense interest the final issue of it.

The protracted period of duration elapsing between the first development of evil and the final extinction of it; has given opportunity of making manifest to men and angels the awful character of transgression against God and His righteous laws, in its utter contrariety to His most holy nature. But it has given opportunity also for the revelation and unfolding of His marvellous love and wonderful wisdom, counteracting both in "the hiding of His power," and in the manifestation of it, what would seem to be the inevitable ruin of the human race through the transgression of one man.

The power of Satan, established in the earth through the sin of our first parent, has been terribly exhibited in varied manifestations of evil, from generation to generation, darkening the minds of millions, turning their hearts away from the bright centre of light and love, degrading them by idolatry, polluting them by impurity, corrupting them by manifold errors, filling them with hatred and malice, visiting their bodies also with sickness and terrible diseases, and clouding their future beyond the grave with impenetrable shadow. With what affecting solemnity does the apostle speak of the malignant influences of this evil being, when he says, "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious

Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." In combination with the mighty power of Satan is wonderful wisdom, whereby he adapts his delusions and temptations to the ever-varying phases of thought in different ages and localities, to all the modifications of intellect and education, bodily appetite and desire. And so he is a spirit of infidelity in one, a spirit of suggestive doubt in another, a spirit of prostrate superstition in another, a spirit of uncleanness in another. He is with the king on his throne, with the legislator in the framing of laws, with all the noblest institutions of human government, with the basest of men, and with the most exalted; ever insinuating evil, ever warring against the truth of God, ever compelling men, by terror on the one hand, or drawing them by the seductions of pleasure on the other, to serve the god of this world; reigning in the power of a mysterious usurpation, instead of rendering uncompromising allegiance to Him who is the living and true God, the great King of eternity, concerning whom the commandment is given binding on every child of man and on every intelligent creature: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

All the various phases of evil set forth in the Word of God, in the record of its histories, in the foreshadowings of its prophecies, and especially those noted in the predictions of the Book of Revelation, stand intimately connected with the working of the power of this mighty and mysterious adversary. There is the man of sin, that great embodiment of evil in human nature, carrying itself in defiant and rebellious opposition against authority, human and divine; there is the beast and the false

prophet working lying miracles, and persecuting to the death the saints of God; there is the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, on whose forehead is written, "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," and she drunken with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus. All these, and all others referred to in the sacred Scriptures, whether they have been revealed in fact, or are hereafter to be revealed, and whatever varied forms they assume, according to times and circumstances, and the onward-flowing current of human events—they are all instrumental agents for carrying out the work of Satan, which is oppression, cruelty, tyranny, slavery, sorrow, death, which is to hinder to the uttermost the benignant work of God on the earth.

But against the mighty power of Satan, and all his mischievous wisdom, still the blessed work is carried forward. The Son of God has been manifested to destroy the works of the devil. He appears on the arena of the great conflict, that wondrous Man, most holy, good, and true—"the way, the truth, the life." The mystery of iniquity worketh on the one hand, concentrated in Satan as its head; the mystery of godliness on the other. Great is that mystery of godliness—"God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." And yet before He is received into glory, in His humiliation, in His suffering, in what may be called the impotence of death, He destroys him that had the power of death. He strikes a deadly blow at the empire of Satan, from which it is destined never



to recover. Yet the power of the adversary is prolonged, though probably in weakened manifestation, until the times appointed of the Father; but even that weakened manifestation, if such it be, is "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly," overcoming thousands, beating down tens of thousands, binding the intellect and the heart of man in chains of slavery. Howbeit, there are those who contend against him in the power of redeeming love, in the consciousness of their acceptance with God in and through the Beloved, with a strength and energy derived from above, supported by steadfast faith in the promises of God, and by the steadfast hope of ultimate and triumphant victory. They have been, from time to time, sorely harassed by Satan, and by the instruments of his power. They have been mocked and scourged, and despoiled of their goods; they have been subjected to bonds and imprisonment; they have been stoned; they have been sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, wandering in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth; constituted authority, ordained for the good of man, has put forth its power to do them deadly injury. They have been thrown to wild beasts by the power that should have saved them. They have been burned in the fierce flame; their pain has been exasperated to agony by devilish instruments of torture, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus, because they would not serve Satan, but would serve God, and walk in His truth and the sanctifying power of the Gospel, and publish its great salvation to others. Oh! blessed martyrs of the holy Jesus! They cast in their lot with the Son of God in the great controversy between good and evil; and though Satan has

often prevailed to destroy for a season their mortal bodies, he has not prevailed to overthrow their faith, nor make their souls swerve from the way of righteousness. In their virtue, in their rectitude, in their triumphant faith God has been glorified, and His truth promoted in the earth, in spite of the efforts of the enemy, and to his confusion.

The struggle is great, and earnest, and severe. The controversy is carried on by day and by night. It covers all the intervening time between the fall of man and his final recovery perfected in glory through grace. But the end comes at last. That end is victory to the saints of God. That end is salvation, triumphantly fulfilled to all the redeemed of the Lord. That end is boundless joy to all His servants, and glory bright for eternity, in the holy city, in the unfading inheritance, in the everlasting Kingdom, in the renovated earth.

When the mystery of God shall be finished, according to the testimony of His servants the prophets—His mystery, His mysterious ways in permitting the triumph, the comparative triumph, of wickedness for a season, and for a season also the humiliation, the comparative humiliation, of truth and righteousness—then shall appear the grand hour of victory, splendid, triumphant, and immortal victory; then the day for singing endless hallelujahs to the God of salvation, for singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, all the ends of the earth uttering praises with one heart and with one voice. Then shall all things be finally and completely renovated, according to the working of that mighty power, which was mighty in the beginning to arrange the confusion of the pri-

meval chaos of the material world, which is mighty to re-arrange it by discharging all the disturbing elements of sin, and to restore, in more than pristine excellence, the moral dignity of man.

In the day of the renovation of the creation it shall rise to a higher order of perfection than that originally assigned to it in the day that God pronounced it very good.

The first, indeed, was perfect in its kind. There was no moral taint in it. It had all the fresh bloom of unspotted righteousness. There was no pain, no suffering, no enmity between the creatures whom the Parent of love had created and made. All was beauty, purity, freshness, and love. But in another sense it was not perfect, namely, as regards immunity from danger, and the entrance of a subtle and malignant enemy, and a most lamentable casting down from its estate of dignity and holy happiness.

The restored earth shall have that perfection which did not appertain to the first. It shall be secure from every foe, safe from every danger, hedged round with everlasting security. In ancient times God said of His vineyard, "A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." So it shall be in that day with regard to the universal renovated earth. The Lord Jehovah will keep it night and day. But, indeed, who could approach it with hostile purpose? When Satan has been cast into the lake of fire, and his angels with him, and all his fellow-workers in iniquity, and their power to do mischief is broken for ever, who then could approach to hurt it? Everlasting security shall

be there. No alarm by day; no terror by night. All friends, no enemies; all peace, no conflict; all righteousness, no wickedness. Peace, joy, love, safety for ever and for evermore.

What a bright and sublime prospect is this which is opened out in the beaming page of prophetic illumination! How may they rejoice, in hope most glorious, whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, the children of God, of His covenant, of His grace, the immortal heirs of a kingdom that endureth imperishably! This prospect! oh, how brilliant, and captivating, and comforting! In what superb contrast it appears to all that has ever been!

The historian reviewing the events of ages gone by finds the records of the past written, like Ezekiel's roll, with lamentation, mourning, and woe. A celebrated writer of history has pronounced it to be little more than a record of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. Surely this witness is true. Who will hesitate to believe it who has searched the archives of history, ancient, mediæval, modern? No doubt, speaking comparatively, there have been periods of national tranquillity. And there have been days of bright domestic happiness, in which families have rejoiced and embraced one another in love. There has been a still more refined and hallowed joy in all the sublime exercises of religion, in prayer, in praise, in good works to the glory of God; but what is all this but an occasional gleam of sunshine breaking out through the rough tempest of human adversity? Still the tempest has howled and raged through centuries and generations, and still it howls and rages, and shall even to the end.

But the geological philosopher professes to look further back into the profound recesses of a most remote antiquity, over a wide waste of undefined ages to a period of duration which was long, long before man existed, to compile and to write histories. He thinks, he observes, he considers, he calculates, he is confident that he discovers traces of organisms of pre-Adamite date, developments of animal life on a monster scale, dinotheriums, megatheriums, and mastodons, such as have long ceased to exist, but have left behind them the gigantic memorials of their former existence. Is it a dream? is it a fancy? is it a myth? is it false reasoning in connection with fossil remains of the past? is it vague theory unsupported by practical verification, and which can never be so supported and confirmed? But be this as it may, the geologist, though he finds, or thinks that he finds, much to amuse the imagination and stimulate the researches of intellect, yet finds nothing to gladden the heart, nothing but a waste, a desert, shadows, and death. It is only when we look forward into the future, in the clearly-shining light of the divine revelation, that the shadows melt away, and creation is peopled with forms of loveliness, and the heavens are glorious in brightness, and the sun shines with a brilliancy that never dazzles, and with a heat that never oppresses; and there is no need of the tempering shadow of an intervening cloud, and the earth is clothed with never-fading verdure of intensest hue, and the breezes are perfumed with the breath of flowers innumerable—flowers of exquisite and unimagined beauty—flowers whose brilliancy and variety would bring to nought the choicest exotics that bloom now in the sunniest, serenest regions of the earth. The

holy Isaiah, foretelling, in the power of the divine Spirit, the restored glory that should come to Israel in the latter day of their national existence, wrote in the hallowed poetry of heaven—"I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of waters, and the dry land springs of water; I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree and the pine, and the box tree together." Oh! what a promise is this of refreshment and beauty and fertility and wealth, and yet it only applies to a partial restoration, and of a small portion of the world. What shall it be in the renovated earth? There shall be no wilderness there, no arid desert of trackless waste, but universal fertility and everlasting bloom. There shall be the trees of the Lord's planting, how majestic, how beautiful, and in the manifestation of endless variety, evoking never-ceasing admiration and delight: and there shall be no darkness, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor sickness, nor death, but life and health and pleasure and gladness of heart, and the fulness of all satisfying delight to the eye, to the ear, to the taste, to the smell, to every sense, and to the intellect and the heart.

The former things have passed away. All things are become new—new and fresh and bright and beautiful and brilliant and magnificent, abiding for ever and ever. And the voice of the Lord God is heard walking in that paradise in the music of everlasting love; and man seeks not to hide himself as Adam did, when guilty shame mantled upon his brow; but he comes forward with unabashed boldness, in the consciousness of ever-

lasting acceptance, in the consciousness of unreprouable justification, in the consciousness of perfect sanctification, reaching to body, soul and spirit, in the consciousness of love, to his God and Saviour, pure and fervent. He hears the blessed voice, and the music of it, and his heart leaps with joy; he magnifies the Lord in the fruition of his boundless blessedness, and holds glad communion with Him in the power of an ever-abiding love.

This is restoration, this is God's work of restoration, beginning in the day of man's transgression, perfected for ever in the new heavens and the new earth. There dwelleth righteousness for evermore. There they have come, even the redeemed of the Lord, to the Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the paradise whose glorious beauty is not as a fading flower of this present vain earth, but imperishable in its loveliness, and to an innumerable company of angels, exalted in dignity, golden angels of light, angels of Jesus, and their presence is as the rapture of love. There they are gathered together, even the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names of old were written in heaven, in the Lamb's book of life, and the mingled multitude associated with them, gathered in the millennial era, and sanctified in holiness. And God, the Judge of all, is with them—He, the Creator, the Preserver, the Benefactor; and Christ, the Redeemer of all, is with them; and God the Holy Ghost pervades every heart, and fills every spirit, and inspires every tongue. And there is the voice of endless praise, and the rapture of infinite joy. And the heavens drop down fatness, and the earth is full of melody, and

the beasts of the field praise Him, and the birds of the air, and the breezes of heaven, and the majestic trees, and the waving forests, and the lovely flowers, and every flowing river, and every purling brook, and every falling cascade with its glittering spray sparkling in the sunlight, and showing the many coloured tints of the rainbow, where, peradventure, rain shall be no more. There is mingled harmony in the voice of nature, and above all, the ceaseless hallelujahs of men and angels. Glory to God in the highest, and to the Son of God for ever. To the Triune God everlasting praise. Peace on earth. Good will to man, for ever confirmed, for ever in fullest manifestation, for sin is purged, Satan vanquished, man redeemed, all things renovated, God glorified. Hallelujah ! Amen. Amen. Hallelujah !





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